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ABSTRACT

A globally competitive Mississippi must be built through investment in the education, training, and skills of its people. Recommendations for improving the system involve (1) a human resource and economic development strategy built on a partnership between the state and communities and (2) a state-level human capital strategy board. Critical target groups are adults preparing for work, teenagers preparing for adulthood, and children preparing for school. For adults, a workplace learning campaign should focus on private-sector basic skill, literacy, and worker retraining programs and training consortia run by employers. For teenagers, recommendations include clear measures of performance and accountability for skills required for high school graduation; JOBSkills, a complementary program of school and part-time jobs starting in the 10th grade; a statewide pregnancy prevention program; and a youth community service corps. For children, Head Start and family literacy programs should be expanded; early childhood health and nutrition programs should be funded; welfare reforms that encourage transition to work should be implemented; and day care partnerships and standards should be developed. Guiding principles for building a competitive work force are (1) centering lifelong learning on individual self-esteem and motivation; (2) developing community-based responses to human resource challenges; (3) creating a seamless web among providers of education, training, and human services; (4) bridging racial divisions; (5) targeting the rural poor; and (6) recognizing that all sectors, communities, and individuals are responsible for lifelong learning. (SK)

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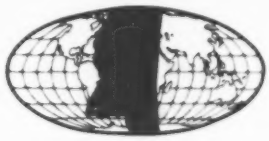
GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE PEOPLE:

FINAL REPORT TO THE HUMAN RESOURCE COMMITTEE



Prepared for:
Human Resource Committee
of the
Mississippi Special Task Force
for Economic Development Planning

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November, 1989

CE 054 647

MISSISSIPPI:
A GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE PEOPLE

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About this report: This report is based on information provided by: Mississippi state and local agencies, regional meetings across the state, interviews with state and local leaders, health officials, educators, training providers, businessmen and women, among many other Mississippi citizens, and a survey of 800 Mississippi companies.

This report was commissioned by the Special Task Force on Economic Development

The role of Mississippi's people in creating a globally competitive economy.

A globally competitive Mississippi must be built by the people of Mississippi for the people of Mississippi. It is the only way we can make sure our families and our children enjoy a rising standard of living.

Being competitive with other states and other countries in today's world means that the education, training, imagination, and skills of Mississippi's workers must be second to none.

It used to be that economic growth depended on tangible assets like being on a river, having an abundant local supply of raw materials, or a low-cost labor force. But as the brains and creativity of people have become more important to economic growth, so does the need to think of economic development more broadly. Areas that once were considered quite apart from economic development -- education, health, quality of life, social welfare policies, -- must now be examined as critical factors which will determine if Mississippi is to grow and prosper.

Mississippi has made tremendous strides forward in recent years by investing in its people. Mississippi has begun to create a culture which supports lifelong learning -- through mandatory kindergarten, education reform, improving higher education, and expanded adult literacy and worker training efforts. Mississippi has moved aggressively to improve the health and welfare of its youngest children-- its next generation of workers. These efforts must be maintained and expanded if Mississippi is to secure a better place in the world economy.

This report is a guide to taking the next steps.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The bulk of this report describes current Mississippi efforts to develop the skills and talents of its people, and suggests strategies for Mississippi to consider in order to dramatically increase and improve these efforts. Specific, programmatic recommendations following from these strategies include:

System Recommendations:

- ***Mississippi Community Partnership.*** *A human resource and economic development strategy built on a new partnership between the state and its communities.*
- ***Human Capital Strategy Board.*** *To articulate clear standards of "global competitiveness" for all Mississippians and to coordinate human investment strategy and resources for lifelong learning, a state-level working group comprised of all public agencies with a "piece" of the education, training, and health puzzle, as well as private sector representatives.*

Target Group Recommendations:

Adults: Preparation for Work

- ***Work-Place Learning Campaign.*** *Private sector led basic skill, literacy, and worker re-training program focused on the work-site.*
- ***Training Consortia.*** *Joint training programs run by employers.*

Teenagers: Preparation for Adulthood

- ***Implement Education Reform II,*** *with clear measures of performance and accountability for skills required to graduate from high school.*
- ***JOBSkills programs with local employers.*** *Complementary school-work learning and part-time jobs for teenagers starting in 10th grade.*
- ***Statewide Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program.***
- ***Youth Community Service Corps,*** *including Peer Training Institute and Rural Youth Enterprise Development program.*

Children: Preparation for School

- ***Expand Head Start and "family literacy" programs throughout Mississippi.***
- ***Continue to fund and implement early childhood health and nutrition programs.***
- ***Implement Welfare Reform to encourage transition to work.*** *Target assistance on long-term welfare recipients. Raise benefit level over time.*
- ***Expand and publicize child support enforcement efforts.***
- ***Continue state efforts to develop day care partnerships and standards.***

SECTION I.
THE CHALLENGE

1. A CHANGING WORLD

Mississippi's people have become the key ingredient in economic growth.

> ***GIVE OLDER WORKERS LEAVE TO UPGRADE SKILLS, FIRMS URGED***
> *"Employers should give training leave to workers over 40 to allow them time to upgrade their skills, recommends the National Productivity Board..."*
>
> SINGAPORE SUNDAY TIMES, headline,
> May 14, 1989

> *"Low-wage companies no longer are confined to looking at states like Mississippi for a new home. They can look to Mexico, Malaysia and Taiwan, where most people will always work for lower wages than Americans... the only way America's states can survive with a low-wage strategy is to embrace the living standards of Third World countries. That is precisely the standard from which Mississippi is trying to break loose....successful strategy hinges on a well-educated work force capable of adapting to high-technology manufacturing, good transportation and affordable, available capital."*
>
> NORTHEAST MISSISSIPPI DAILY
> JOURNAL, Editorial, September 7, 1989

The world has changed.

Today's world economy already favors business firms and workers who are highly skilled, technically literate, willing and able to adapt, and capable of working together as a cooperative team. As the world economy has changed so Mississippi must change. The reasons for these changes include:

- In the international market, knowledge based products and services already form the mainstay of the American economy;
- New technologies are transforming the workplace;
- Knowledge is the creator of wealth and jobs; and
- Our workforce is aging and racially diverse.

- ***In the international market, knowledge based products and services already form the mainstay of the American economy.***

  Low-skill jobs are ending up in the developing world, paying wages that Mississippi can't compete with. Already 30% of our national income is derived from exports. In Mississippi today over 80,000 of its 1 million plus jobs are directly linked to export markets, and the figure grows each year. In this global marketplace, the advantage for Mississippi and the US will be our brains and our productivity. Mississippi now competes with Singapore, Japan, Mexico, as well as California and North Carolina. Learning to use technology wisely and continually building a better mousetrap are the keys to economic growth for Mississippi and the country. Mississippi must prepare for better jobs.

- ***New technology is transforming the workplace.***

  Tomorrow's more complex jobs call for a higher level of basic skills along with a continual updating and expansion of skills. Computers, flexible manufacturing machinery, communications advances and the like make it possible for goods and services to be customized for rapidly changing world markets. In this environment, workers need varied skills, and must be able to do complex tasks and make their own decisions.

- ***Knowledge is the creator of wealth and jobs*** .

  There is no doubt that an educated, highly skilled workforce creates more innovations, nurtures entrepreneurs who in turn create jobs, and can sustain higher value-added service and manufacturing jobs which raise the wages of workers. Mississippi must create such a climate of innovation and entrepreneurship.

- ***Our workforce is aging and racially diverse.***

  Nationally, over 75% of tomorrow's workers are on the job today. In Mississippi, with a younger than average population, the figure is 55 %. This is still the majority of tomorrow's workers. To compete, we must continually re-invest in the skills of our adult workers. As ever, America's workforce continues to change. Tomorrow's workers all over the country will contain growing numbers of minorities and ethnic immigrants--blacks, hispanics, asians. Today, blacks make up one-third of Mississippi's workforce. Mississippi must develop the skills of black and white workers equally if it is to compete with other states and nations.

2. MEETING THE HUMAN RESOURCE CHALLENGE

Mississippi cannot be a "winner" in this global contest of brains, teamwork, and innovation unless we use the talents of all our people, to create growth that benefits all our people. Mississippi must compete as one society. In doing so Mississippi has some unique advantages:

- A special pride in Mississippi that helps us work together.
- Hard-working, honest people.
- Close-knit communities where people care about each other.
- A solid manufacturing and agricultural base.
- A beautiful, rich land of great abundance and promise.

Mississippi also has some real disadvantages. A large gap exists between the skills of Mississippi people today and those required for the future. Given the changing nature of job requirements, and the demographic shifts in the workforce, this gap is likely to get worse, not better without sustained action.

What is Required of Mississippi Workers?

The latest research, consistent with the Task Force survey of Mississippi businesses, shows that today, and increasingly in the future, Mississippi employers will require a combination of "new" basic skills that aren't being provided to the Mississippi workforce. The best description of these skills appears in the publication *Basic Skills*, issued by the American Society for Training and Development. (See box next page for further description). It includes:

- *Competence in Reading, Writing, and Computation*
- *Learning-to-learn*
- *Communication: oral and listening Skills*
- *Problem-Solving Skills*
- *Personal Management Skills: Self-esteem, motivation/goal setting, employability/career development*
- *Creative thinking*
- *Group effectiveness skills: Interpersonal, teamwork, negotiation*
- *Influence Skills: Organizational effectiveness and leadership*

Each of these skills are essential and some version must become Mississippi's definition of "work-readiness". Creating more, better paying jobs in Mississippi depends on it.

THE "NEW" BASIC SKILLS

The best description of new basic skills appears in the publication *Basic Skills*, a report issued by the American Society for Training and Development prepared under a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. The new basic skills, according to ASTD, include:

- **Learning-to-learn.** This is an essential skill that every worker must have in order to learn effectively in new situations and to acquire new skills for the future. It provides the basis for lifelong learning for social as well as workplace skills.
- **Competence in reading, writing, and computation.** Society sets its own goals for literacy in the 3 Rs. Viewed only from the perspective of employers, workers must have job or occupational literacy--the ability to perform job-related reading, writing, and computation tasks demanded in the workplace. Vocational programs, especially remediation programs for adult workers, must attempt to function contextually, so that instruction will be meaningful to workers in terms of their prior knowledge and workplace experience. Job-related computation skills refer to an employee's ability to perform different mathematical tasks such as quantification, computation, measurement, problem-solving, and comprehension.
- **Communication: oral and listening skills.** To be an effective communicator, a person needs three component skills--awareness and understanding of his or her dominant style of communication; understanding and valuing communication styles that differ from one's own; and the ability to adjust personal style to a style that differs from yours.
- **Problem-solving.** This skill refers to the ability of a worker to detect the existence of a problem, critically and creatively propose and analyze possible solutions, and choose a viable solution to resolve the issue.
- **Creative thinking.** Creative thinking refers to the use of different forms of thought to visualize innovations and generate ideas to fill a perceived need. Having a workforce with the ability to develop new and relevant ideas is a hallmark of new basic skills.
- **Personal management skills: Self-esteem, motivation/goal setting, employability/career development.** These are the building blocks for good morale and, ultimately, organizational productivity.
- **Group effectiveness skills: Interpersonal, teamwork, negotiation.** These are some of the most critical yet different skill needs for the future workplace. As workers move into a more interdependent environment, the ability to work with others to accomplish job tasks will begin to dominate. Negotiation refers to the resolution of differences through compromise, accommodation, or collaboration.
- **Influence Skills: Organizational effectiveness and leadership.** Quite simply, this is the ability to work through the social and organizational connections that exist within a firm, or between the workplace and the outside world. Leadership motivates others to understand a goal and move toward accomplishing it.

The Current Situation

Mississippi, like the nation, is slowly making the transition from a low-skill agriculture and mass-production economy to a high skill manufacturing and service economy. Contrary to some notions, Mississippi for many years has been a manufacturing state. Nearly 3 out of 10 Mississippians work in manufacturing versus 2 of 10 in the nation. As manufacturing and supporting service jobs have changed, so have the kinds of people employed. In Mississippi the numbers of professional, technical, managerial, sales, and clerical jobs in the state have increased over the past 10 years, while production and agricultural employees have decreased. These trends are likely to continue.

While Mississippi's economy is weak, the jobs that do exist in Mississippi already require more advanced skills:

- By Jobs For the Future's own comparison method, Mississippi's current and future job skill requirements for levels of reading, factual knowledge, thinking, interpersonal, motivational, and physical skills are the same as workers around the country.

- Mississippi jobs assessed by the reasoning and reading skills they require give an average score of 5.37, just below the national average of 5.6. While Mississippi lags behind "high-tech" states like Colorado (5.8), it's ahead of states like Indiana (4.7).

- Over 50% of the new jobs in Mississippi between now and 1995 will require the highest levels of intellectual skills and factual knowledge. In these measures, Mississippi is ahead of comparison states like Indiana.

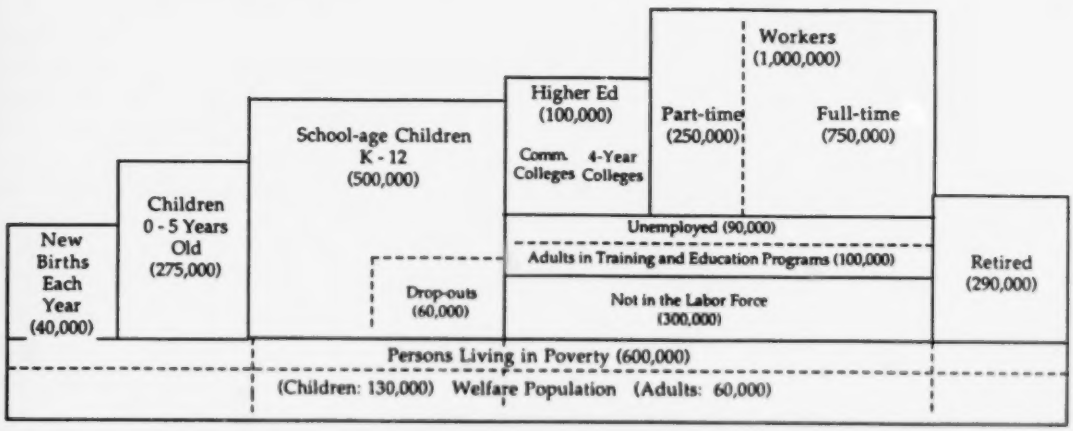
- Mississippi employers agree with these predictions. Our survey of 800 companies told us their greatest skills needs *among all types of employees* were for problem-solving skills, communication skills, ability to determine priorities, and leadership and group effectiveness.

- Mississippi employers today can not get the skilled help they need. In key skill occupations close to 70% of employers surveyed aren't able to find workers. This in a society with 9% unemployment.

Are Mississippi's Workers Ready?

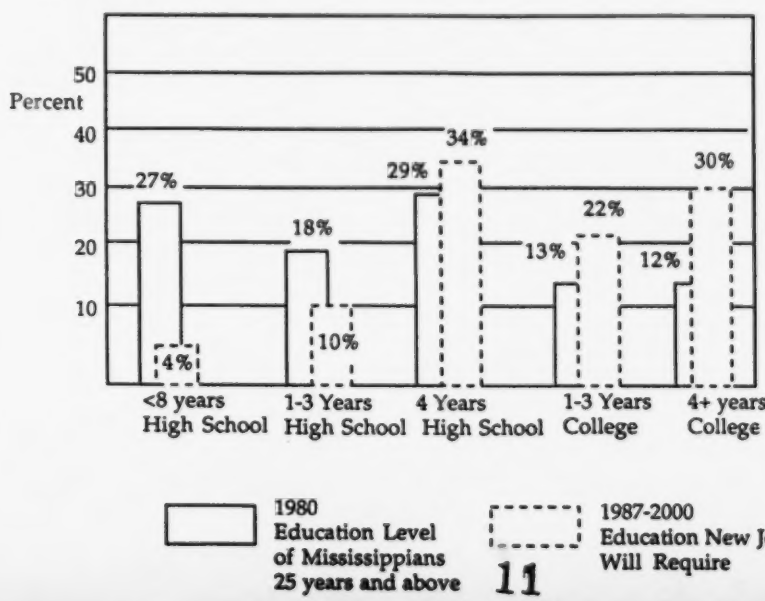
Is Mississippi ready to fill these higher skills jobs? Not yet. The challenge for Mississippi is to help its citizens get up to speed to take advantage of these new, more demanding jobs. To meet this challenge we need to examine where our workers of today and tomorrow will come from.

The next diagram paints a rough picture of where our 2.7 million people are--how old they are, whether in-or-out of the workforce, poor, on welfare, in school, or earning their own way.



The easiest way to tell if Mississippians are "work ready" is to show how much schooling we have, compared with the demands of tomorrow's jobs. The following table compares education attainments of our workforce, with the percentage of jobs available for that level of education in the future, based on Department of Labor estimates.

Mississippi Workforce Education is Below What's Needed for New Jobs



As the previous diagram demonstrates, Mississippi has a tremendous skill gap. This skill gap is no surprise.

- While 27% of our work force had less than 9 years of schooling, only 18% of the work force nationally and 24% in Southern states were comparably uneducated.

- Mississippi ranks 48th among states in percentage of people without a high school diploma (close to 47% of adults over 25 versus 35% nationally) and over 10,000 additional young people drop out of high school each year.

- Only 12.3% of Mississippians had four year degrees, versus 16% nationally and 14% in other Southern states.

And these gaps are much worse for black Mississipians than for white ones.

Critical Target Groups

Given the characteristics of Mississippi's future workforce, this skill gap is likely to get worse not better, without a transformation. Mississippi's demographic realities point to several populations needing special attention if Mississippi's workforce is to meet a world class standard. Simply improving our K-12 education system and institutions of higher learning will not be enough.

- 32% of our people are less than 17 years old (versus 28% nationally). Mississippi ranks number three in the country in percentage of population of school age (5-17). Too many of our young adults are not moving into higher education or good jobs.

- With a high birth rate (17th in the country), Mississippi has large numbers of its children in the pre-school years. Close to 40% of its children are born into poverty.

- Very large numbers of the adult work force are in need of additional skills. Estimates are that 27% or 400,000 Mississippi adults are functionally illiterate.

- The overwhelming majority of Mississippi's future workers will be women and minorities--over 6 out of 10 new workers.

No state has a better opportunity nor a more urgent need than Mississippi to be innovative and effective in reaching these populations. If successful, Mississippi can catch up quickly and move past other states in building a true workforce for the future.

- **Women:** The female labor force grew at double the rate of men during the last decade. And estimates are that 60% of Mississippi's new labor force between now and 2000 will be women. From 1980-1987 the number of women working in Mississippi or looking for work rose three percent, while men's participation in the economy fell off. Three out of 10 of these women worked part-time. Many are mothers with young children.

- **Minorities:** The future success of the Mississippi economy will be linked to its ability to use its black workforce. Blacks constitute 3 of every 10 Mississippi workers, but are consistently underrepresented in skill occupations. Due most probably to the out-migration of whites, all of the increase in state working age population between 1980 and 1987 was accounted for by blacks. Blacks are more likely to be dependent on part-time employment than whites. This is not by choice; 47% of part-time black workers wanted to work full-time, while only 23% of white part-time workers desired to be full-time.

- **Adults--Preparation for Jobs:** In Mississippi and across the nation, the overwhelming majority of tomorrow's workers are in the labor market already. Mississippi has more than a million workers on the job and several hundred thousand more who can't find work or who have given up trying. In the short-term, Mississippi can only compete if its current workers are prepared for more complex, higher skilled occupations.

  With only 1/2 of adults possessing a high-school education, 130,000 adults dependent on welfare, and many workers employed in companies or at jobs where little or no on-going training is delivered, the challenge for Mississippi in creating a world class workforce is tremendous. It is a responsibility which both the public and private sector share.

  As a survey of Mississippi employers showed, 64% of Mississippi employers feel more training is desirable for their existing workforce. Employers across the board viewed getting the quality workforce they need as one of the top constraints on future growth, and manufacturing firms in particular rated labor quality as their number one competitive concern. Close to 70% of all employers can't find skilled help they need in key occupations.

- **Teenagers--Preparation for Adulthood:** Much of the ability to develop the state's economy depends upon the knowledge, skills, and motivation of new

entrants to the workforce. Much of Mississippi's economic future rides on what happens to these new workers before they enter the labor market.

Mississippi still has an intolerably high drop out rate (over 35 of every 100 students in 9th grade don't make it to graduation), and unacceptable levels of youth unemployment (32%, and 50-60% for blacks). Teenagers are dropping out of the labor force much faster in Mississippi than in the nation. In Mississippi the incidence of teen births is rising from levels that are already above the rest of the country. The costs to Mississippi society of young teens who have to care for an infant are staggering. The Board of Public Health estimates the the direct cost of AFDC, food stamps, and the like for each infant is $35,000 over their 20 year childhood. At the current rate of pregnancies, that means $280 million dollars each year is already committed to pay the bills for these mothers and their children.

More subjective indications such as the comments of employers, educators, and participants in our regional meetings, point to teen-agers who aren't motivated, inspired, or aware of opportunities to work and better themselves. In too many cases, Mississippi's young people aren't provided role models or acquaintance with the skills necessary to contribute at work.

- **Children 0-4, Preparation for School**: These are Mississippi's workers for the next century. All the evidence proves that investment in the health and education of our youngest citizens will pay enormous dividends in reduced social welfare costs and greater productivity in years ahead.

  Mississippi is a young state relative to the rest of the country and has a high birth rate -- over 40,000 infants are born each year. Far too many of these infants are born into poverty. We estimate close to 40%, versus 20% nationally. While improving in key measures such as infant mortality rates, low birth weights, and the numbers of mothers who receive adequate pre-natal care, Mississippi still rates near the bottom nationally. Head Start and other early childhood education is available for some but not enough of Mississippi's young people who might benefit from it. 63% of Mississippi's mothers of young children are now working, and many women, particularly poor women, are hard pressed to find day-care for their children.

Why We Need to Invest in *all* Mississipians: The Costs of Doing Nothing

This report will suggest strategies to make sure all Mississippians, and particularly these vital at-risk groups, get the education, skills, and assistance they need to be globally competitive. But we first must all agree on why reaching all Mississippians is so important.

To be competitive, Mississippi must work as a society utilizing all its citizens. We can't be content so see *some* of our children in good schools, *some* of our workers getting basic literacy and skill training, *some* of our young people graduating from high school and college into good jobs, *some* of our infants enjoying good health. The costs to Mississippi society of those who don't make it are already too enormous.

Mississippi simply can't afford to continually spend its scarce resources to maintain a large percentage of its people in poverty and dependency and to continually compensate for health and education deficiencies.

High school drop-outs, babies born to teenagers, prematurely born infants, families on welfare, underskilled and illiterate workers -- cost *all* Mississippi citizens millions of dollars each year in taxes and the support programs that these taxes pay for. They also cost untold millions in lost opportunities for economic growth these citizens could help generate. We are all "at-risk" unless we help *all* Mississippi citizens become economically self-reliant.

Mississippi is also one of the morst rural states in the country. 53% of its population lives in rural areas. Currently whole regions of the state and whole communities are in danger of being left behind economically. As Gov. Mabus recently put it to the Rural Development Conference: "If we only help the big places and ignore the places where we grew up, we haven't succeeded."

Whether rural or urban Mississippi spends too much just to stay in place. And the days of standing still have to end.

3. THE LIFELONG LEARNING SYSTEM TOWARDS CONTINOUS IMPROVEMENT

Today "education" can't just happen in the classroom for a certain period of time. Today's demanding economic climate asks all of us to keep learning over our lifetimes. It also requires us to look hard at what we are doing to prepare our children, teenagers, and adults for this world of work. We must do better. If we think of continuous improvement over our lifetimes as the goal of a human investment system, we will see that the current "system" is still not adequate to meet the needs of Mississippi citizens. But it is improving.

Mississippi has seen the human resource challenge of lifelong learning and made tremendous headway in recent years, particularly in improving its basic education system.

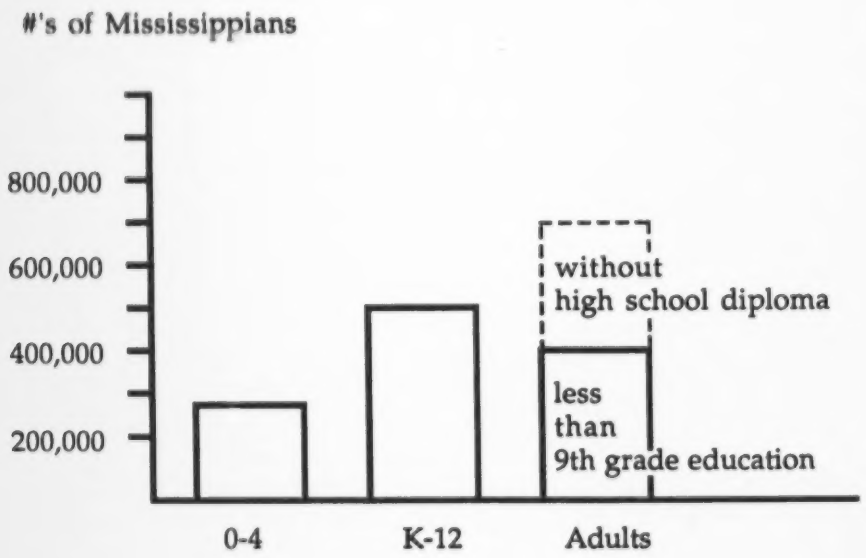
Education reforms and increased investments in early childhood education, infant and mother health, adult literacy, and higher education have already begun to pay dividends. Communities around Mississippi are taking the bull by the horns and devising new and effective means of educating their people, and lifting citizens out of poverty.

The current education reform effort continues on this ambitious course--under the banner of creating a "world-class" education system for the year 2001, and stretching the idea of essential education investments to include pre-school children and adults. The Task Force endorses and supports fundamental education improvement and reform.

While we applaud the increased investment and reforms in basic and higher education over the recent years, we must build on these initiatives additional reforms and an ambitious agenda to help the populations which are at-risk of falling into poverty, or entering the work force ill-prepared and in so doing putting all Mississippi at a disadvantage. We must look at the lifelong learning "system" and seek dramatic improvements.

Where the Needs Are

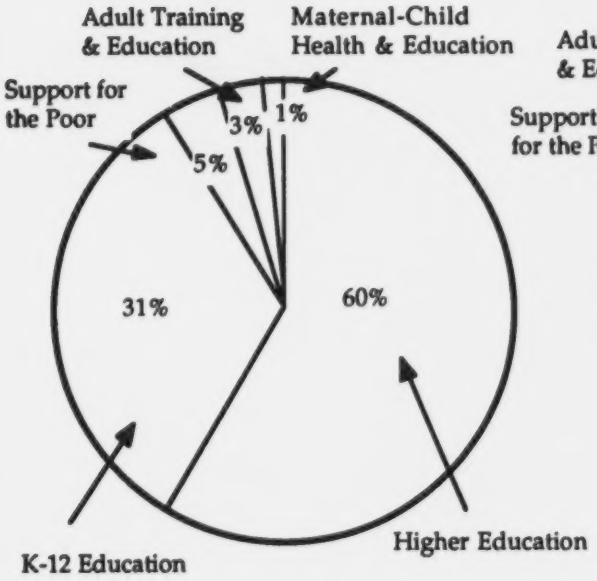
As we have seen, there are large populations in need of additional education. The following bar graph illustrates the rough size of these different Mississippi populations.



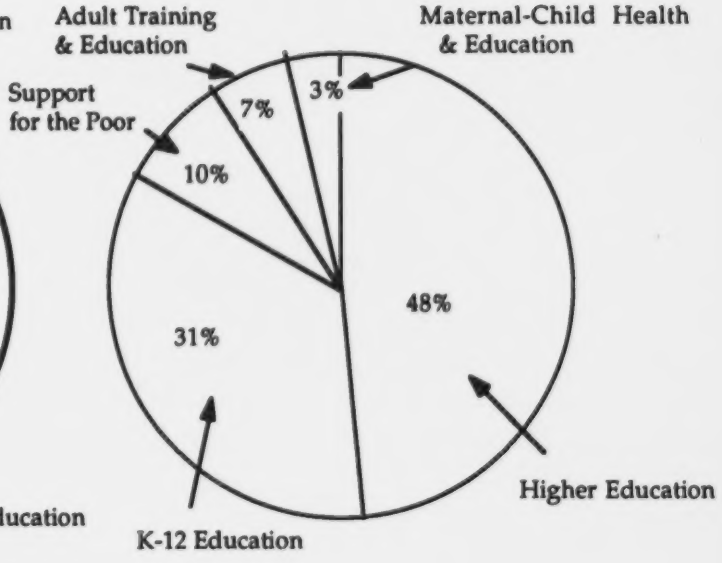
Where the Help Is:

How much are we spending to help people in various stages of their lifelong learning? These two pie charts are our very rough estimates of where current state, and total dollars (state, federal, private, and local) go in the main areas of human resource development. As you will note, despite roughly equal numbers of children and adults in need, the lion's share of both state and total spending goes to K-12 and higher education. And Mississippi remains dead last among southern states in putting its own money into adult education.

Total State $ in Human Resource Investment ($1,250,000,000)



Total $ in Human Resource Investment ($2,900,000,000)



Programs and Institutions

But money is not the only issue. In fact in all our discussions around Mississippi, with people in and out of the "learning system", the more common view was that Mississippi wastes a lot of the money it does spend. We repeatedly heard complaints about different programs and institutions competing with each other for state and federal dollars to run their own pet programs. Frustration was expressed at the "chaos" of existing programs and institutional rivalries at both the state and local level. Results or "outcomes" of various education and training institutions were hard to get and even harder to compare.

A lot of good programs do exist which help people--and we try to highlight some of them in this report. We also will discuss in more detail the inadequacies and strong points of the lifelong learning system as it affects our target populations. But the system as a whole is characterized by warring bureaucracies and juridsdictions, and inadequate attention to performance and accountability. Some examples:

- A company gets calls from three different people representing three different programs for adult education and training.
- A community college that doesn't know where or how many of its technical graduates are placed in jobs.
- State bureaucracies charged with serving the disadvantaged that don't talk to each other.
- Public and private community literacy efforts that don't work together.
- A PDD representative who doesn't know a Small Business Development Center was established in his town until he read it in the paper.
- The perception that out-moded vocational courses still exist at secondary schools and community colleges.

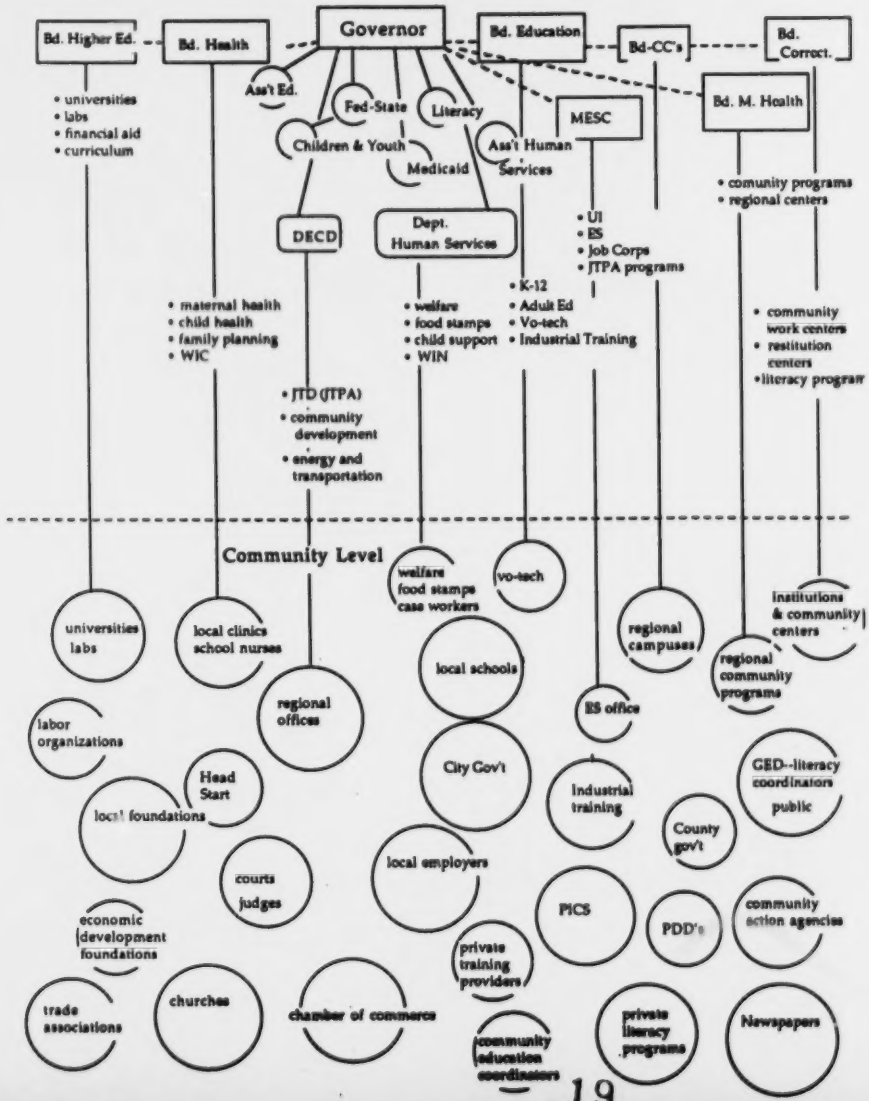
Some institutional and programatic rivalry and complaints are to be expected in any state. And certainly some competition among education and training providers is healthy to encourage better performance. But Mississippi particularly can't afford conflict which leads to duplication and inefficiency, or institutional rivalries at either the state or local level that impede performance for Mississippi's citizens.

Certainly Mississippi doesn't lack for state and local institutions and programs. In fact it has a good amount of infrastructure and incentives in place in

the human resource "system", particularly at the local level including schools, Universities, Community Colleges, PDD's, local and county governments, community action organizations, local foundations, Industrial Trainers, and tax credits for worker training and job creation. And recent state government reorganizations should do more to encourage accountability and efficiency among state agencies.

While additional funding for neglected pieces of the lifelong learning system is essential, Mississippi must look first to better use the resources and institutions that currently exist. The map below identifies most of the "players" in the network for human resource development at the state and community level. At both levels Mississippi must radically transform the way it does business.

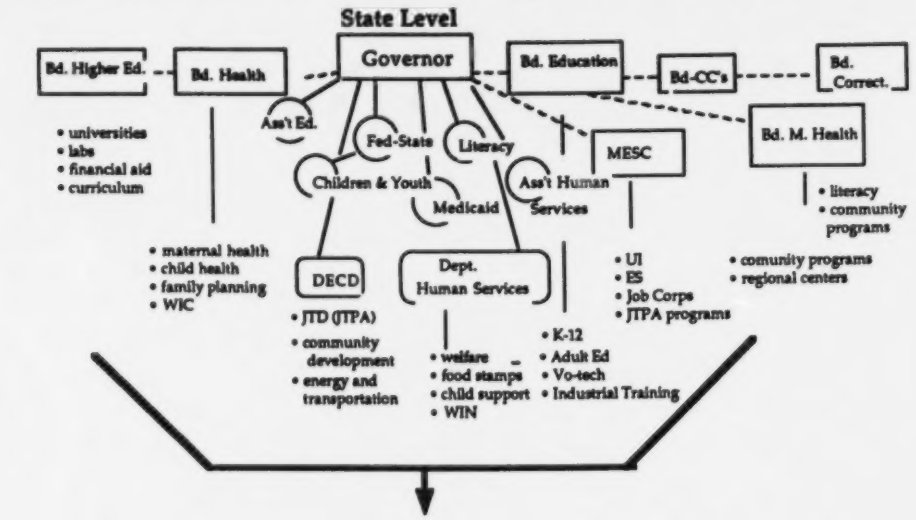
Our challenge is twofold: *Dramatically improve the capacities of Mississippi communities to organize themselves as collaborative teams for human resource development; and improve state organization and coordination of a human resource development system which ensures accountability, performance, and efficiency.*

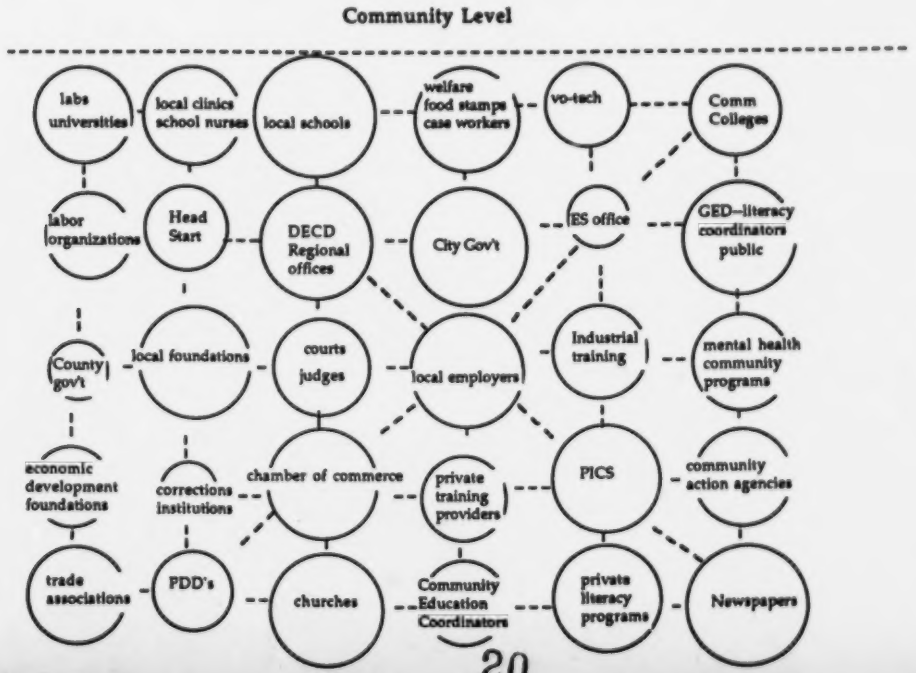


System Improvements

To meet the challenge of competing in today's globally competitive environment, both the state of Mississippi and each and every one of its communities must fundamentally re-think the way it does business. As one local official we interviewed put it: "We need to work together in a tight circle."

The map on the previous page must begin to more closely resemble the map below: tighter connections and communication at both the state and local level, and emphasis on performance and accountability. This is not only a change that Mississippi must make but that US corporations and organizations of all sorts are already making -- flat hierarchies, decentralized decision-making, teamwork is what Mississippi needs to compete.





4. VEHICLES FOR CHANGE

To realize this systematic change we suggest two statewide initiatives which will help to organize and implement a competive Mississippi economic development and human resource system.

Mississippi Community Partnership

Mississippi has a lot of root problems. There is no one silver bullet to solve them. Rather Mississippi must commit to a permanent sea change in the way it organizes itself and acts to encourage human resource and accompanying economic development.

Rather than look to outside saviors, like the miraculous appearance of a "plant", Mississippi communities must look within to see if they have the essential prerequisites for attracting that plant, or more importantly, helping the industries and entrepreneurs within the community to prosper.

To foster this self-help, community-based institutions such as community colleges, high schools, universities, Chambers of Commerce, PDD's, community organizations, and local offices of state agencies must work together--*permanently* -- rather than each looking to get as much money as they can to run their own pet programs.

The state of Mississippi must cut the umbilical cord that encourages local institutions and programs to try to get money from Jackson and Washington for separate agendas, and replace it with a system based on community partnership among existing institutions.

The most successful communities in Mississippi and the nation are those that have constructed such a partnership; through the creation of local foundations, public-private community strategic plans, or simply aggressive and real teamwork among local officials and institutions. Local schools won't improve, nor will investments in housing, health care, and the like be made until the community demands it--and works together to implement it. Often the catalyst in community development has been a visionary educator, elected official, preacher, or businessman or woman. There is no way to predict where community leadership can or will come from. But it needs to happen and Mississippi has to make it happen.

Mississippi must seek to reproduce this process of self-education and self-help in all its communities. Any true community partnership must tackle many issues, but it is especially important in developing Mississippi's

human resources. Today the skills of human beings are the chief source of economic growth and new jobs.

The report "After the Factories Revisited" found that in rural areas of the South, the single most powerful predictor of economic growth is the level of education and human resource development. Period.

Successful communities around the country and in Missisippi have learned this lesson and shown that they can control their own destiny and reap the harvest of economic growth as never before by educating and helping their people participate fully in the economy.

Community Partnership: Create a permanent capacity to plan and adapt to economic change and solve community needs at the local level. How do we get there:

1. A Public commitment by Governor, Legislators, and private sector leaders to a community-based development strategy. Call for permanent community development efforts in all of Mississippi with state assistance, building on and adding dramatically to the good efforts of DECD, Community Colleges, Chambers of Commerce, Private Companies, and others already underway.

- Governor, legislators and State officials convene public "Congresses"/meetings in communities to announce Partnership and begin process of community development.

2. Communities form Steering Committees to work at local comprehensive planning and identification of challenges communities themselves see. Through this process communities begin to build the capacity to help themselves: develop local data, analyze community strengths and weaknesses, set community goals, and hold local hearings to inform the process. (Some Mississippi communities have done this with good results).

- Governor and State officials work with Communities based on their ability to organize these "steering committees" or similar structure representing different sectors of community. Criteria for steering committees could include:

  1-black-white participation
  2-public-private participation
  3-multiple juridsdictional participation (county/town)
  4-community-based organizations represented

3. Community Partnership challenge grant funds allocated to community steering group for proposals based upon the following :

- Measurable results to be achieved in human resource or other investment (literacy rate up x%, teen pregnancy down x%, Head Start enrollments up x amount, school graduates employed by x number, x # of houses rehabilitated),
- Process of decision making conforms to criteria above,
- Provision of a local match, with match based on some measure of local ability to pay (per capita income or other measure).

4. Besides challenge grants, State facilitates by :

- Requiring state agencies locally to organize an interagency task force to be available to work with the steering committee.

- Organizing presentations by state and local officials identifying community challenges that they see: adult literacy, teen pregnancy, health, housing, (many communities don't know what is happening in their own back yards).

- Making sure State agencies, PDDs, Education institutions provide technical assistance to existing community-based organizations and in the formation of new ones to meet identified needs in housing, financing, training, land and infrastructure development.

- Organizing "cross pollination" presentations from other communities that have developed similar process.

- Asking state and local Leadership training groups and alumni to take a key role in local steering committees and in organizing statewide education programs about locally based development strategies.

- Ensuring State officials are responsive to community steering commitees and are called upon to personally appear.

5. Governor and State officials focus personal attention and special assistance to "jumpstart" community development planning in areas of greatest human need, and where obstacles to local cooperation prove insurmountable without outside intervention.

6. Funding for local steering committees staff and process provided locally. Local steering committees working with local officials develop plan for ongoing assessment of progress towards reaching community goals.

7. PDD's, DECD, and local steering committees combine to craft regional development plans for issues beyond community juridsdiction.

Timeline: Steering Committee Meetings, Summer 1990

Community Strategic Planning 1990-1991

Challenge Grant funding 1991 Legislative session

Lifelong Learning System

The flip side of what the communities must do is the state system for encouraging accountability, performance, innovation and community-based leadership in human resource development. Local control is sacred in Mississippi and that is not going to, and should not change. But the reality is that all areas of the state now compete in a global marketplace. While communities must be free and encouraged to adopt innovative strategies for improving the education and skills of citizens, the State must insure ultimate outcomes are achieved.

Mississippi is reaching for ambitious goals through continuing education reform. One of Mississippi's goals must be to quickly build its own globally competitive labor force to compete in a changed world economy. Mississippi can achieve this goal by being the first state in the nation to institute a lifelong learning system, including full cooperation and agreements between institutions to allow all citizens, at all ages, to continue their education, while assuring accountability and performance throughout the system. A lifelong learning system will require an unprecedented integration and coordination between the workplace and the classroom.

What is a learning "system"?

To the individual seeking services the learning system must appear as a system; a network of varied opportunities provided by a diverse set of public and private providers. It must be customer driven, user-friendly (easy to negotiate), well coordinated, and accountable. The system should include:

- All education and training services easily accessible,
- Allocation of educational resources and services to provide equal opportunity,
- Choice and diversity in education and training options,

- Outcome and performance as system drivers,
- Individual-centered approach to learning,
- Early intervention to reach at-risk populations,
- Coordination and partnerships between institutions and the private sector.

How can Mississippi develop such a system?

Step One: Basic Education improvement and reform.

Mississippi has taken the first steps in upgrading, reforming, and increasing funding for its K-12 and higher education system. These are long-term investments in Mississippi's future, building the competitive workers of tomorrow. These investments and reforms must be continued.

Step Two: Human Capital Strategy Board

Establish a professionally staffed public/private policy board to oversee design, implemention, marketing, and evaluation of the state's training, education, and supportive service system for adults and youth. Following the lead of Michigan, which has created a Human Investment Council combining private sector leaders with administrators of the JTPA, MESC, Education, Economic Development, and other state bureaucracies involved in education and training (we suggest also including Health), such a board can set priorities, provide performance incentives, improve compatibility among service providers, and tie together disparate programs and funding streams.

The recent reauthorization of JTPA provides resources for the establishment of a state Human Resource Investment Council in every state: this may serve as the institutional form for this recommendation.

Job # 1 for Human Capital Strategy Board will be to:

- Develop common statewide definitions and outcomes of "work readiness". These should be based on Mississippi's measures of basic skills to be globally competitive, similar to those in the beginning of this report.
- Establish criteria for integrating existing state and federal programs and dollars into a more coherent system of investment.

- Establish standards for programs related to determining client skills, aptitudes, special learning needs, and providing support services.

- Establish system for monitoring attainment of expected outcomes for all programs and institutions in system.

- Develop means to allocate resources to these programs and institutions based on achievement of outcomes.

- Develop common data base for information, and format for reporting program outcomes; eliminate current incompatible data.

Timeline: Establish Human Capital Strategy Board by February 1990.

Implementation plan with standards, roles, and timelines developed within 5 months.

Job # 2: Develop a skills assessment tool for measuring Mississippi's definition of work-readiness. This tool would be deployed in all Mississippi education and training programs, and used to standardize intake procedures, determine incoming skill levels, needed services, progress towards completion of personal plan, and effectiveness of programs which individual has used.

To be most effective assessment must be:

- Driven by individual needs, not mandates or eligibility requirements of current programs.

- Include common intake form and procedure, used by all employment and training providers (carrying further common intake tool now being developed by Welfare and MESC).

- Used to measure effectiveness of programs, and to issue "report cards" to consumers.

- Used to allocated operating and incentive funds.

Timeline: Target date for implementation January 1991.

(In developing these diagnostic and assessment tools include institutions and organizations outside of government such as unions, professional organizations, trade associations, in order to develop compatible standards with professional programs, apprenticeships and internships.)

Job #3: Like many state Skills Corporations, Strategy Board can act as a clearinghouse between state and federal dollars and effective education and training partnerships. The Strategy Board should develop incentives and allocate funding for better partnerships between private sector and training institutions and programs:

- Match private training dollars with state dollars in training consortia among groups of employers.
- Challenge grants as part of Community Partnership to communities showing innovative human resource plans.
- Re-orient state adult vocational-technical funding for workplace "basic-skills" training with private sector match.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING A COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE

The system changes just described can help Mississippi get organized to meet its human resource challenges. But specific programs and policies that are developed in a lifelong learning system are only as good as the principles that guide them.

Following are several guiding principles and strategies for developing Mississippi's human resources. Together they reinforce each other and provide specific direction for investing in Mississippi's people. As we discuss our target populations in more detail in the next section we will build specific recommendations around these guiding principles.

These strategies are not necessarily new to Mississippi. As we shall see they build on approaches that are already bearing fruit in Mississippi and across the nation. The hard part is to make sure they guide our efforts and to follow through with tangible actions that are consistent with these directions.

1. **Center lifelong learning on the personal context, self-esteem and motivation of the individual.**

   The first building block of self-growth is self-esteem. Effective assistance must build on the existing context of an individual's life--their personal hopes, dreams, fears, and sense of worth. Next, individually tailored plans must reinforce personal connections that are most important--to families, peer, and work groups. A partnership must be nurtured between the individual and those

most important in their lives, and must set clear expectations in terms of what the individual must do, and what the state or assisting agency or group will do. This means making welfare and job training not a hand-out but a personal contract for improvement and self-sufficiency. It also means developing a client-based system whereby the multiple needs and problems of the individual (health, housing, education) are treated together in a comprehensive manner.

2. **Develop a true community-based response to meet human resource challenges.**

   Just as all politics are local--all real solutions for helping people make the most of themselves are local. The bonds between people and institutions are built here, state and federal money and programs get delivered, and neighbors decide to help each other or they don't. Jackson bureaucrats can't create local leadership and locally responsive solutions. In order to best understand education, health and family needs, and deliver an effective response--nothing can substitute for a mobilized, energized community--clear on what they want to do, and unified in doing it. Our churches (black and white), our schools, our businessmen and women, our local officials--together hold the key for meaningful change. Where this community action and leadership doesn't happen, it must be nurtured.

3. **Create a seamless web among providers of education, training, and human services.**

   The lifelong learning system must be "user-friendly". Clients, both businesses and students, must be able to get what they need at the right price, be able to easily understand and access the system, move from program to program, and institution to institution with no friction or duplication, access learning over their lifetimes, and receive skills and credentials that are up-to-date, and transferrable between institutions and regions.

4. **Bridge the racial gulf which still separates many Mississippians.**

   While Mississippi has made great strides forward in race relations and is viewed by outsiders perhaps too harshly in terms of its racial problems -- it must meet the reality and the perceptions head-on. We still are separated by race; individual from individual, community from community, region from region. Mississippi has a higher percentage of blacks (35%) than any other state in the nation. It needs both its minority and white citizens to develop world-class skills if it is to prosper. Blacks are still underrepresented in skilled trades, professional and management ranks. Both blacks and whites must meet this challenge. Mississippi must deliberately and explicitly craft its human investment strategies to bring blacks and whites together in business, in communities, and across regions of the state to move beyond its past.

5. Target rural poor for special assistance.

Mississippi is one of the most rural states in the country. A globally competitive Mississippi won't be a reality when large numbers of people aren't skilled, and large, predominantly rural parts of the state provided with real job opportunities. Here the state has a particular responsibility to help. But this doesn't mean just throwing more money at the problem. It means developing regional and community leadership and economic development plans with aggressive state assistance. The state can send a signal that these regions matter. It can prod and encourage communities and regions to work together and help reproduce effective programs and projects. The state can reward local innovation and initiative. It can help link rural communities, workplaces and schools to the global economy. It can make sure its own agencies have clear missions and are cooperating and effective in working with communities and individuals in distressed areas.

6. Prepare Youth for an Increasingly Technical and International Workplace.

Doing better on the basics tested by the SAT and ACT is crucial but insufficient to insure a competitive workforce. More and more jobs are going to require technical credentials. Right now, however, disadvantaged, minority, and female youth are less likely to acquire the skills or interests to pursue technical degrees. Given the composition of Mississippi's present and future workforce, early and intensive interventions are needed to make sure that the state's workforce will have enough technically prepared entrants and it does not find itself left further behind as basic skill levels rise. Similarly, increased knowledge of foreign language and cultures will be increasingly important. Together these represent a challenge to current and future education reform efforts in order for Mississippi to take giant leaps forward.

6. DEVELOPING STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS: WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING?

Here, there is one simple message: All of us as workers, employers, educators, officials, community leaders, and citizens of Mississippi have roles to play in creating a culture which realizes the goal of continuous improvement. Work force preparation must now be a lifelong and interactive process requiring workers, their families, employers, and education and training institutions to work together in new ways.

To develop strategies to meet the needs of Mississippi's key target populations we must allocate more efficiently and effectively the responsibilities we all share in creating a competitive workforce:

- *People in the private sector must be globally competitive*: For its workers and managers this means less hierarchical and compartmentalized organizations to allow greater flexibility, and human resource policies that promote continuous learning, teamwork, participation and flexibility. Companies must take the need for skill upgrading seriously and realize their own competitive futures depend increasingly on the quality of worker's skills.

- *People in the public sector must be competitive*: Honest and accountable, public officials, educators, and civil servants at all levels must reach for new standards of performance if Mississippi is to compete. Public servants have a responsibility to cut through organizational and bureaucratic procedures to be lean, efficient providers of public goods like basic education, become strategic investors in human resources, and effective catalysts for private sector and community innovation to meet pressing social needs.

- *People in our communities must be competitive*: People must work together as a community, linked to the outside world, and depending on each other, innovative and accountable in delivering basic goods and services like education and health which promote economic growth and individual well being.

- *Each individual must be competitive:* Educated, skilled, healthy, motivated, working together, black and white as one society, and fully participating in a culture of lifelong learning and continuous improvement.

SECTION II.
A LIFETIME OF OPPORTUNITY:
TARGET POPULATIONS

We've seen that Mississippi has a lot of work to do to transform its "system" for human investment into one that helps all Mississippi citizens get the skills they need to be globally competitive. The next section digs deeper into the needs of our key target groups: Mississippi adults, teenagers, and young children, and the ways in which the lifelong learning "system" can be improved and extended. In this discussion we make suggestions and recommendations to help these groups, and particularly women and minorities among these groups, participate more fully in a growing economy.

Where we are, Where we need to go.

Examining current Mississippi efforts to assist our target populations we can see that elements of successful strategies are already at work. Mississippi can take tremendous encouragement from the success it has had in recent years in building its human potential. Much more needs to be done.

Here we look at each target population, outline the magnitude of need and key issues to address, summarize current Mississippi practices to assist each group, and discuss best practices and recommendations for future action. There are a lot of "good ideas" in this report--from Mississippi and elsewhere--which can serve as inspiration and models for state and local human investment efforts. We have limited our specific recommendations to a few key actions which address what we feel are the top priorities for change.

ADULTS PREPARING FOR WORK

By this time, most Mississippians are aware of the dimensions of the gap between the education and skill attainments of its current work force and the requirements for the jobs that exist today, and will be created tomorrow. There are several ways to measure this skill gap:

- There are over 1 million Mississippi men and women on the job today. If national figures are any guide, 2 out of 3 will require some form of training or re-training to keep their jobs.
- There are 700,000 Mississippi adults who lack a high school education, most of whom are on the job today.
- Of these seven hundred thousand, 400,000 are functionally illiterate.

- There are 300,000 adults who are below the poverty level.

- There are 60,000 adults who depend welfare payments.

Mississippi faces tremendous challenges in creating an effective lifelong learning system that can reach a significant number of these adults in need. Some observations from around Mississippi:

> *"Our companies are afraid of high-wage jobs--all they think is they will have to pay more, they don't want literacy."*
>
> *"You can't expect proud people to walk into a room that says "literacy"--you've got to call it computers or something."*
>
> *"Since the only money is federal--everyone's trying to grab it (JTPA)--some proposals make no sense."....."Everybody is greedy and grabbing for money, everybody wants to do their own thing"....."No one wants to work together, that would require someone to be selfless--it will take someone to bust some heads together to get cooperation."*
>
> *"The school should be the home of one-stop shopping for economic development"....." The Community College should be the home of one-stop shopping for economic development"...The city development office should be the home of one-stop shopping for economic development"....."The Department of Economic & Community Development should be the home of one-stop shopping for economic development."*
>
> *"Clients have to find their own way around the system--Welfare can't do anything with their huge caseloads--we need a client based system."...."People on welfare too often face a choice during the winter....heat or eat!"*
>
> *"Our business advisory committees don't lead--they just react"*
>
> *"I'll be walking in the door of a plant (Industrial Coordinator),.... and the Adult Basic Education person will be walking out; it makes us look stupid."*

These impressions may be correct, or they may be exaggerated--but it is clear that Mississippi has a lot of work to do:

- Mississippi employers bear witness to a tremendous skill gap -- over 70% can't find the skilled help they need -- and all firms rank poor labor quality as

the top or one of the top constraints on competitiveness. While Mississippi employers recognize the need to train workers, they aren't satisfied with the help they are getting. Only 13% of employers said they were happy with education and training assistance provided by public and private institutions, 45% were dissatisfied.

- Tremendous variations exist among adult skills and opportunity in different regions and communities. Adults without a high school education are 70% of the workforce in some areas--30% in others. Poverty rates vary from highs of over 50% of all families to lows of 10%.

- Mississippi has a welfare system that can barely pay the checks, much less help individuals develop and act on a plan to escape dependency. Welfare reform will help, and provide additional resources for meeting the barriers to self-sufficiency many on welfare experience, including lack of training, child-care, and transportation. Welfare reform deserves our best effort to make it succeed.

- Adult education and training programs remain spotty, disjointed, and relatively meager in light of the tremendous need that exists. Mississippi lags far behind its southern neighbors in devoting any of its own resources to adult education. While state and federal figures don't adequately reflect local investment in adult education, of all the southern states, Mississippi is last in matching federal dollars with state dollars for adult education. (While Mississippi matches 11% of what the Federal government gives it, North Carolina, Arkansas, and South Carolina match 300%, and Florida 2000%!).

- Mississippi does have many of the resources and institutions it needs to do better--community education and leadership efforts, community colleges, technical schools, industrial coordinators, economic development agencies, welfare agencies, employment security agencies, planning districts, workplace literacy tax breaks, local literacy councils and many other institutions and programs that currently constitute pieces of the adult education puzzle. What's needed are clear goals, better cooperation, and allocation of scarce resources to do the most good.

Goals/Benchmarks of Success

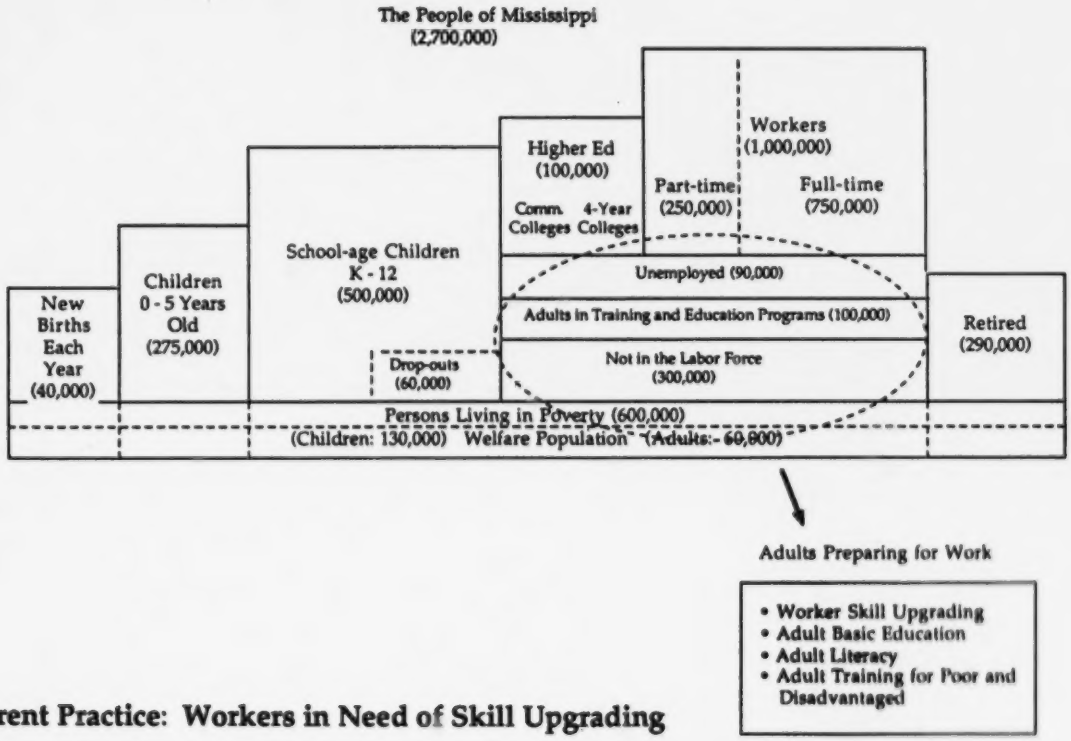
To meet these challenges we will have to have some high goals to shoot for. We will know we've accomplished something when:

- 9 out of 10 adults will be functionally literate.
- 9 out of 10 Mississippi firms will have well developed human resource policies and programs.
- More Mississippians receive GED's than drop-out of school.

- All Mississippi communities reach a threshold of literacy and are certified "Cities that Can Read".
- The Welfare Caseload is reduced 10%.

There are several overlapping groups of Mississippi adults who could usefully benefit from additional education and training in order to prepare for better jobs:

- Adults wanting basic skills in math, reading, etc.
- Adults wanting a high school diploma
- Adults on welfare or economically disadvantaged
- Adults on the job needing skill upgrading in specific tasks
- Adults wanting enrichment or continuing education
- Adults in the corrections system



Current Practice: Workers in Need of Skill Upgrading

In cooperation with the state's community colleges, DOE's 15 regional industrial training coordinators arrange customized training for employees of new and expanding businesses. Each year they spend over $1 million dollars to train 12,000 workers. Some individuals who participate in these programs are JTPA eligible. Industrial Coordinators have discretion to negotiate the respective contributions of employers and the state to this customized training. Industrial Coordinators, DED, and the Tax Commission also will begin helping firms take advantage of the new

25% employer tax credit for workplace literacy and basic skills training. Mississippi is the first state in the nation to offer such a tax credit.

The State Department of Education currently has a small federal grant ($350,000) for workplace training with a small number of companies around the state. The grant requires a workplace audit and a customized, often on-site training program is developed.

Private Sector Training: It is estimated that at any one time between 10-20% of Mississippi companies take advantage of the training services and facilities of Mississippi's Industrial Coordinators, vo-tech schools, and community colleges. This percentage may increase with the new tax credit. Our employer survey tells us, however, that firms trust and utilize private training providers such as equipment vendors, trade associations, and consultants more than public programs -- and they grade private assistance higher than public institutions.

Most training is done by Mississippi employers themselves. 85% of employers had provided informal on the job training. 61% of employers surveyed said they provided some form of formal training, and 75 percent of these relied on in-house staff and programs. Looking to public institutions, in the past 5 years 39% of employers said their employees had been trained at some time at a community college, 29% used universities and 4-year colleges, and 20% had looked to secondary vocational schools. 7% of employers had taken advantage of the state's customized training program through Industrial Coordinators.

Employers were not all satisfied with the training *opportunities* available to their employees through public or private institutions. Only 12% of Mississippi firms were happy with available offerings; over 45% were unsatisfied.

Despite believing that training was a very good investment, very few firms actually followed through in the form of devoting considerable time to worker skill upgrading, integrating new technology, remedial education, or job orientation. Only 28% of firms spend more than 20 hours per worker, per year on any of these tasks. Sales and technical staff got the most training per worker, management and laborers the least.

Current Practice: Adult Literacy/Basic Education

Mississippi has definitely got the message that there are lots of people who could benefit from basic literacy courses. With the state decision to allocate all JTPA 8% money for adult literacy efforts--new money ($2.6 million) becomes available to boost the current public and private efforts, (although JTPA funds can only serve the "economically disadvantaged"). Until this year, state sponsored efforts were confined to 23 local programs serving only 2,000 individuals. Many other private, church, and community literacy efforts have sprung up in the past several years and

coexist with state efforts. High drop-out rates and the difficulty of attracting those most in need plague most programs.

The current state gameplan is to fund worthy proposals around Mississippi--while targeting new organizational and financial attention on 3 pilot regions in the Delta, Northeast, and East Central Mississippi. The hope is to encourage new regional cooperation, innovation, and accountability in state funded and private literacy efforts. JTPA funds are to be phased out over three years to create self-supporting local efforts. If successful this approach will be expanded. To succeed will require close state collaboration with current local literacy efforts.

Largely federally funded *GED equivalency courses* have been run by the Department of Education at local schools, libraries and the like during available hours. Mississippi only matches 11% of federal money for adult basic education. Although as many as 20,000 people have been enrolled annually in GED classes, Mississippi has graduated only 7-8,000 individuals per year in recent years. With new federal regulations mandating adult education funds must be targeted on reaching hard to serve (0-9 yr of schooling) populations--a significant challenge remains for local adult education coordinators.

Community Education: School districts which can afford it are developing "community education" efforts which open up school buildings after-hours for literacy classes, hobbies, typing, computers classes, day-care, and other activities. Local promotion efforts recruit adults and young people for these offerings--and modest fees to cover teachers and materials are sometimes charged. Currently 25 school districts out of 152 have community education coordinators.

Current Practice: Adult Training for the Poor/Out of Work

The federally funded JTPA program serves approximately 24,000 economically disadvantaged adults and youths each year through three Service Delivery Areas PICs (Gulf Coast, Capital, and the Mississippi SDA). This only reaches a few percent of the eligible population in Mississippi. Nine thousand welfare recipients were part of these programs.

JTPA is a placement-based program, requiring certain placement rates among those served or positive terminations for youth programs. While Mississippi, like most states has met its placement goals, state efforts are underway to create incentives for the local PICs to target those hardest to place--but most in need. (Federal Legislation is currently proposed to combine JTPA and Voc-Ed monies and re-orient the programs to target hard to serve). JTPA makes special funds available for training dislocated and older workers. Mississippi's training efforts involved 2,500 dislocated and 1200 older workers last year.

The *Mississippi Employment Security Agency* runs the state Employment Service used by over 300,000 people. They placed 92,000 Mississippians in jobs last year. Most of the Employment Service clients are "walk-ins". Only 10-13% are UI recipients, less than 3% welfare clients, and roughly 22% were JTPA eligible. Local offices provide screening and assessments of job candidates. They refer JTPA eligible candidates to JTPA programs and run on-the-job training programs themselves, cooperate on WIN with welfare, and recruit for Mississippi's 3 federal Job Corps programs.

Welfare and food stamp recipients are referred to many adult training programs including JTPA, adult literacy, and GED, as well as welfare's own job development programs. The Food Stamp Employment and Training Program requires food stamp recipients to participate in job training, job development, or workfare programs, but over 90% of recipients are excused due to age, need to look after young children, and other criteria. The Welfare Department is also arranging its own employer connection meetings where local employers are encouraged to hire welfare recipients. WIN--a federally funded, customized job development program for welfare recipients run jointly by Welfare and the Employment Service operates in only 6 counties serving 4,000 people, due to funding cuts. Several self-employment projects for Welfare recipients are underway and if successful these pilots will be expanded.

Among all these programs to aid the disadvantaged the single biggest problem appears to be the lack of a coordinated set of goals and priorities and cooperation among state and local efforts to achieve those goals.

Many agencies, programs, and providers exist--they all compete for the same limited pool of largely federal funds. With federal JTPA money making up the largest part of funds available for adult education and training, community colleges, community action groups, and many other institutions and programs work to get a piece of the action. The quality of PIC oversight is hard to gauge -- those in the system will say it works well, critics contend we just don't know if most PIC funded programs are working.

Real and long-standing differences exist between different bureaucratic fiefdoms. For example, the Welfare Department currently is running its own employment and training programs for food stamp and welfare recipients partly because they claim to have gotten no service from JTPA and the Employment Service. Those outside Welfare complain about the lack of service Welfare delivers to its own clients and its unwillingness to coordinate activity. Getting the different agencies, each of whom has a piece of the welfare puzzle to act together will be a major undertaking, but one which can reap tremendous benefits for Mississippi's welfare population.

With 300 clients per social worker, Welfare (now Human Services) cannot provide the kind of service to all its clients in the form of assessment, referral and case management that is optimal. Tough choices about where to focus limited resources need to be made. Nor does JTPA, Welfare, the Employment Service, or any other agency have sufficient funds to help all welfare and economically disadvantaged clients. Better choices need to be made together about how to spend available funds, and all programs must be held up to close scrutiny of their actual performance.

The *Corrections* sytem, including inmates, parolees, and probationers totals 16,000 Mississippi adults. While it is estimated that up to 70% of prisoners can't read, write, or compute well enough to get a job, a small number of these individuals are able to take advantage of education and training programs. Literacy and adult basic education targetted at young offenders served 900 people last year. 14 community work centers provide supervised, unpaid work, counseling and training opportunities for another 900 carefully screened convicts. Finally, restitution centers provide a community based program of counseling, basic education, recreation, and religious services for 150 low-risk offenders.

BEST PRACTICES: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

All states are grappling with the tremendous challenge of devising effective ways to boost the basic skills of the existing adult workforce and continuously upgrade worker's education in order to stay competitive. In both the nation and Mississippi, we face a special challenge to pull women and minorities into the economic mainstream. Our goal must be continuous improvement. Experience from Mississippi and the rest of the country offers some guidance about what works:

1. **The private sector needs to invest in the current workforce to stay competitive.**

2. **Adults will learn if learning takes place in a manner that reinforces self-esteem and self-worth and can be related to personal goals.**

3. **Assistance must be client-centered and "user-friendly".**

4. **Effective assistance involves mutual and clearly understood obligations.**

5. **United community action involving business, government, educators, human service providers, and citizens can deliver results.**

6. **The state can target areas and populations in greatest need and be a catalyst for effective local and regional action.**

1. The private sector needs to invest in the current workforce to stay competitive.

The companies that effectively invest the most in the continuing education of their employees are the most competitive --IBM, Ford, Motorola. There is no substitute for both direct investment by firms in their own workers, and indirect investment in the form of actively informing the curriculum, courses, and structure of education and training institutions. On-site, work-centered training programs provide real-world goals and a comfortable atmosphere for participants. Companies who take seriously their position on vo-tech and community college advisory councils can make sure course, class materials, and instructors are evaluated by standards of what will succeed in the work-place. Companies can develop quality workers for tomorrow through co-op, apprentice, and mentoring programs.

An example from Mississippi makes the need and the potential for private sector investments very clear:

SNAPSHOTS OF SUCCESS

Marks, Mississippi

BETA II, a maker of electronic assemblies for the Big 3 auto-makers in Detroit, is meeting head-on a direct challenge to the jobs of its 140 workers. Ford Motor--their chief customer, made the situation very clear to Beta and its other world wide suppliers--get up to a Quality One rating or we won't buy from you anymore. Beta II, competing with suppliers in Mexico, California, and around the globe, went to work training its workers in statistical process control, shop math, blueprint reading, communications, and management skills. Some employees went to local voc-ed schools to learn machine ship skills, others were enrolled in special courses on-site BETA II created with Northwest Mississippi Community College. Plant Managers went to advanced process control institutes in Michigan.

After all this, Ford still wasn't satisfied. According to Beta II's George Person, Process Control Manager: "We made their Q1 rating on points-- but they wanted to see a long-range plan for continuous improvement through ongoing training." BETA now is one of the first to take advantage of the state's workplace literacy efforts, and with the help of their local industrial coordinator, DOE staff, and community college they are putting together a continuing program. Person is confident they will make the grade: "We are in a gang war with companies from around the globe--and we are going to beat 'em."

- Some of the most competitive and progressive companies in the country are those that help their work-force stay happy, healthy, and be more productive by meeting the real needs of today's families. Merck Pharmaceutical, a hugely profitable New Jersey based firm has a conscious "family-centered" employment policy which provides flexible benefits, parental leave, and child care.

- Greico Brothers, an old-fashioned textile mill in Lawrence Massachusetts, cut down absenteeism and increased productivity among its predominantly female, minimum wage labor force by housing a day-care center on-site. Employees paid for half of the cost through a nickel an hour taken out of their pay.

2. **Adults will learn if learning takes place in a manner that reinforces self-esteem and self-worth and can be related to personal goals.**

People are proud, and hesitant to admit they need additional schooling or training. Effective techniques for teaching adults link training to personal goals (such as job advancement or the ability to read to children or read the Bible),and take place in a setting that reinforces a positive self-image. A recent survey of GED test-takers in Mississippi revealed that by far the most important reason given for taking the test was personal satisfaction and self-esteem, not economic gain.

Classroom settings are oft-times the worst place for adult learning; participants feel degraded. Also, many adult learners may have bad recollections of classroom experience. Alternatives should include literacy training at the workplace, the use of computers and interactive videos, or other means of creating an environment that is comfortable and dignified.

One story of how this can work comes from Columbus, Mississippi:

SNAPSHOTS OF SUCCESS

Columbus, MS

The Columbus Chamber of Commerce and local leaders did some research into the problems of their area. Adult illiteracy came up as number one, and a local group was formed and money raised to attack the problem. Based at the University for Women, the Greater Columbus Learning Center was established; computer equipment was purchased which could accommodate different types of literacy programs. Local schools help identify at-risk students and parents, local welfare agencies refer their

clients, the juvenile court system remands kids to the program. Radio, TV, recruiting at local employers, mailings sent home with children, among other techniques have built tremendous community interest and involvement. Curriculum manager Ellie Graham credits two key things for the programs success: "Computer training lets people say I'm going for a computer class. Being at a University boosts the prestige of the literacy programs. People feel good about going and aren't ashamed to talk about it."

- "Credentialing" adult learning that occurs outside of the classroom is another means of recognizing its importance and encouraging ongoing training. New York's Board of Regents is available to companies to test workers in various skills and can certify them as having skill equivalencies commensurate with those earned at formal training institutions.

3. Assistance must be client-centered, and "user-friendly".

Successful programs to train the disadvantaged and re-train workers provide personalized service for meeting real, often multiple needs. This means "invisible" inter-agency cooperation to meet individual needs. Clients can't be left to find their own way around a bureaucratic maze.

- The Massachusetts ET program, California's GAIN and other welfare- to-work programs upon which the Federal Welfare Reform is based, show that helping individuals surmount the real obstacles to employment such as lack of day-care, transportation, training, and adequate health insurance, can make it possible for even the long-term dependent to reach goals of self-sufficiency.

- A Northampton County, Pennsylvania program requires local cooperation among all human service providers--one common intake and assessment procedure among health, welfare, social service and employment agencies, and family centered case management.

- The new Michigan "Opportunity Card" is geared to provide "customers" of public education institutions and social service programs one user-friendly way to keep a record of personal skills, employment history, and career goals, and access additional services such as college courses, JTPA training programs, or job counseling services. Combined with a State Human Investment Council and Fund which unites Education, Welfare, JTPA, Employment Security, Economic Development and other agencies in common planning--it forces state and local agencies to set clear priorities and work together to serve the customer--whether a worker is looking for re-training, a young person is graduating from college looking for a job, or a welfare recipient is developing a plan for self-sufficiency.

4. Effective assistance involves mutual and clearly understood obligations.

Clients and service providers have reciprocal obligations. Individuals want to make a deal: "You help me and I will meet the goals and expectations we set up together."

- In St. Louis County, Minnesota, a poor, largely rural section of Minnesota's Iron Range, the growing number of welfare and general relief recipients--single parents, as well as unemployed young adults-- were given a chance to work for $5 an hour, building roads, reforesting timber lands, and developing recreation areas. Monies from Welfare, JTPA, and a small additional state appropriation were converted to a wage. Expectations were simple and direct--work four ten-hour days a week; show up on time for the bus each day or be fired. Local timber executives and social workers jointly ran the program, and helped place individuals in other jobs as they developed skills and experience.

- Successful welfare-to-work efforts build on these mutual obligations--they are not something for nothing, but combine real assistance for real needs--child-care, transportation, health insurance, with the full expectation that the individual will take advantage of this assistance to make it out of poverty--or lose benefits.

5. United community action involving business, government, education, human service providers, and citizens can deliver results.

The raw material of economic growth-- human beings, and the institutions to train and educate the workforce, aren't transportable. Communities who successfully identify what their employers need, what skills are currently lacking in the local work force, and resources they have or need to develop to meet this skill gap, can generate and keep good jobs.

Mississippi has many good examples of communities which are successfully meeting the needs of their employers and workforce, Tupelo being a well documented case. Another example is Oktibbeha County.

SNAPSHOTS OF SUCCESS

Oktibbeha County

Several years ago local leaders and business people identified adult illiteracy as a major community problem and raised money on their own to fight it. The community has organized adult education programs for 500 people using the resources and

assistance of the schools, churches, and newspapers. Schools in the County hired Dr. Mary Dorman as a community education worker in 1985 to orchestrate the efforts, and through her work and that of many others the communities have pulled together. Dr. Dorman reports a new project to work on literacy skills with mothers who are already paid by DOE to act as meal providers for other children: Dr. Dorman says: "I've lived here twenty years and never knew until recently that DOE had found these women--they need a family literacy program and we now know where they live."

6. The state can target areas and populations in greatest need and be a catalyst for effective local and regional action.

The magnitude of need among Mississippi's adult population requires the state to target resources and political clout and make both state and local providers of education and training develop accountable and effective programs.

- Pennsylvania's Ben Franklin Partnership makes state funds available to targetted regions that develop demonstrated linkages between education and research institutions and commercial ventures. The state approves proposals from local and regional "partners" that show workable plans for job-creating research, development, and business investment. The program has successfully worked to start business incubators and new companies which work closely with universities, colleges, and other institutions in developing new technologies, products, and processes.

- In Massachusetts geographic "Targets for Opportunity" were selected on the basis of high levels of unemployment and poverty, and the Governor personally chaired planning meetings of local leaders and agencies, made sure state agencies worked together on the region's problems, brought businesses into the areas, and targeted state resources for specific job training and other projects that the regions developed.

- In Texas the state offers incentives for local and regional cooperation in the form of increased state investment as localities and regions demonstrate a common organization and plan for economic development.

- While too early to tell if it's working, Mississippi's literacy efforts currently are attempting to use the carrot of additional JTPA funding to encourage more local innovation and accountability in literacy programs.

Recommendations

Using these strategies to help guide state and local planning for human investment can go a long way towards making our investments more effective. There are lots of "good ideas" that can be developed further by local and state leaders with imagination and leadership. We feel the following must be the first steps Mississippi takes towards building the strongest possible adult workforce.

I. Work-place Learning Campaign

Mississippi workers of today and tomorrow need at a minimum basic skills and literacy, and in many instances more advanced job specific skills. While better education for our young people is the long-term solution, Mississippi can't wait that long to get its workforce up to a world class standard. The workplace has proven to be the best place to provide training--and most of Mississippi's 270,000 functional illiterates and 130,000 additional non-high school graduates are "on-the-job" today. Mississippi employers want higher skilled workers. With limited state resources, the best way to quickly upgrade work-force skills is to start at the work site.

Mississippi must launch a private-sector led *Work-Place Learning Campaign* developed and run by Mississippi business and trade associations to persuade the 6,000 companies who employ more than 20 workers to test and train current workers on-site in basic literacy and skills. A campaign would need to have several key elements:

- Highly visible public call to action by Governor and Business leaders to send clear message--Mississippi is getting ready to compete--today!

- Set a clear and challenging goal to medium and large Mississippi employers: Line up 600 of 6,000 firms employing more than 20 people in Mississisippi each year over 10 years. Mississippi should target strategic manufacturing and service industries upon which it will build future growth--retailing and other sectors might be excluded.

- Put in place and aggressively market the recently enacted 25% tax credit for this purpose.

- State Human Capital Strategy Board in conjunction with private sector would develop common testing standard & curriculum for work-place literacy program. This testing instrument would combine basic 3 r's with "new" basic skills along the lines articulated in this report. Also would develop outcome measure to "certify" workplaces and credential individual employees who completed program.

- Employers have option of training in-house, through outside consultants, or using local institutions. If looking for help from local institutions, an inter-institution Strike Force would be created to field industry response team (Community Colleges, MESC, PDD's, Chambers, DECD, GED local coordinators, Industrial Trainers). Participating firm would contact one publicized source (perhaps an 800 number in conjunction with the Learning Line) so each community can respond by arranging work place assessment and basic skills training.

- For funding the participation of local institutions, a progressively increasing share of adult vo-tech funding would go to employer requested work site basic skills. Ultimate goal is to re-orient most short-term adult vo-tech courses -- created by secondary schools and community colleges and which result in a "certificate"-- with an employer-driven worker training program for the new certification measure. 30-35,000 adults each year participate in short-term vocational training, not counting JTPA. If over 10 years this many individuals received functional literacy training at the workplace, Mississippi's functional literacy gap would be almost closed.

- Encourage employers to condition continued employment and new hires on meeting a common skill standard.

- Given the limited resources of both Mississippi's public and private sectors, aggressive recruitment of funds for this campaign must be pursued from the federal government, foundations, and larger corporate sponsors.

Work-place learning is the easiest, cheapest, and most agreeable training venue for workers. It also is one of the best ways to upgrade the education and skills of Mississippi's working black and female population. Firms' satisfaction with training will increase as they create it themselves, using their own as well as public facilities and resources. Mississippi companies appear willing to make such a move. Over 50% of firms surveyed expressed interest in participating in a basic skill upgrading program, and an overwhelming majority of firms view training as a good investment.

II. Training Consortia

Mississippi employers express a dramatic need for better trained workers, but an uncertainty over how to accomplish this goal and a dissatisfaction with the range of current public offerings of assistance. Employers use and trust private training vehicles more than strictly public institutions. The solution

must be more joint training programs sponsored or co-sponsored by companies or trade associations.

Consortia can provide appropriate training in an efficient, cost-effective manner, particularly for smaller firms. Such arrangements begin to nurture the intra-industry communication and collaboration required to be competitive, and which is reinforced by the findings of the Economic Process Committee. It also could be a means to encourage minority owned businesses to work together with white owned firms.

The development of these networks can be assisted by the state:

- A team of state and local agency representatives (such as DECD, DOE's Industrial Trainers, PDD and Chamber Representatives) should target small and medium sized firms in particular manufacturing industries which exist in geographic "clusters" (furniture in Northeast Mississippi, Gulf Coast ship-building metal and fabricating industries, textile trades in various parts of the state).

- Recruit client companies through industry trade associations and personal visits. Assess common industry skill demands and training needs, and knowledge and satisfaction or dissatisfaction with local training institutions.

- Use leverage of state officials and concerned employers to encourage local training institutions to collaborate with industry consortia on rationalization of local training for their industry. Industry groups develop and review curricula that meets their needs, and create a new training program if necessary. Public institutions should have an incentive to market their services better to industry consortia, which can pay for services.

- Broker state JTPA, and vo-tech funds for training contingent upon a match by employer consortia.

TEENAGERS-- PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD

The years from the onset of adolescence to entry into the labor market or higher education shape a young person's ability to cope and perform as a contributing member of society. While continuing to demand that institutions of higher education deliver world class education, we need to do more for those who are falling out beforehand. We also need to make sure the bridges between high school, work, community colleges and universities are strong, and that all learning institutions are oriented outwards to meet the needs of individuals, communities, and businesses. Far too many of our young people are slipping through the cracks of the lifelong learning system. There are plenty of opinions about why this is the case:

> *"10th graders have no idea what they will be doing on the job--they need to see it first-hand."*
>
> *"We've got kids coming in looking for work who can't even do basic math."*
>
> *"We may have approved curriculum reform for vo-tech, but I bet no one's closed down one masonry or truck driving program yet."*
>
> *"Vo-tech courses in high school are repeated in Community Colleges"..."There are a lot of useless courses out there." "Instructors have no idea about what a business looks like today."*
>
> *"At the Community College we have to spend all our time making up for work not done in high school."*
>
> *"We need more family planning--but in Mississippi we don't like to talk about sex."*
>
> *"People just don't know the facts about teen pregnancy--if they did they would be screaming!"*

There are some things we do know about Mississippi teens:

- Mississippi still has an intolerably high drop out rate. Over 35 of every 100 students who enters the 9th grade in our state never graduate. Among children from poor homes more than one-half don't graduate.

- Youth unemployment remains extremely high in Mississippi--36% for 16-19 year olds versus a national rate of 16%. Teen unemployment among blacks reaches 50% in some areas.

- Mississippi has a disturbingly high birth rate among teens. The numbers got worse last year, not better. Over 20% of all babies born in Mississippi are born to teenagers (vs. a national avg. of 13%) or over 8,000 annually. In certain parts of the state close to 30% of all births were to teens. Many are repeat pregnancies. 64% of pregnant teenagers are blacks, 36% whites.

- As distressing are the more subjective indications that teenagers are in trouble, aren't motivated, inspired, or aware of opportunities to work and better themselves. In too many cases, Mississippi's young people aren't challenged, aren't provided role models and tangible hands-on exposure to jobs and the necessary skills to succeed at work. Too many lack appropriate guidance, course work, and training opportunities that will excite and prepare them for the real world. High School Vo-tech and technical training at community colleges, while improving in quality, consistency, and integration, still has a long way to go.

- While new mandatory test scores are rising, and are also helping to identify earlier those most at risk, successful remediation efforts to get young people up to speed are hard to find. Health curriculum, school nurses and other efforts to prevent health problems and teen pregnancy still are not in place in enough communities in Mississippi.

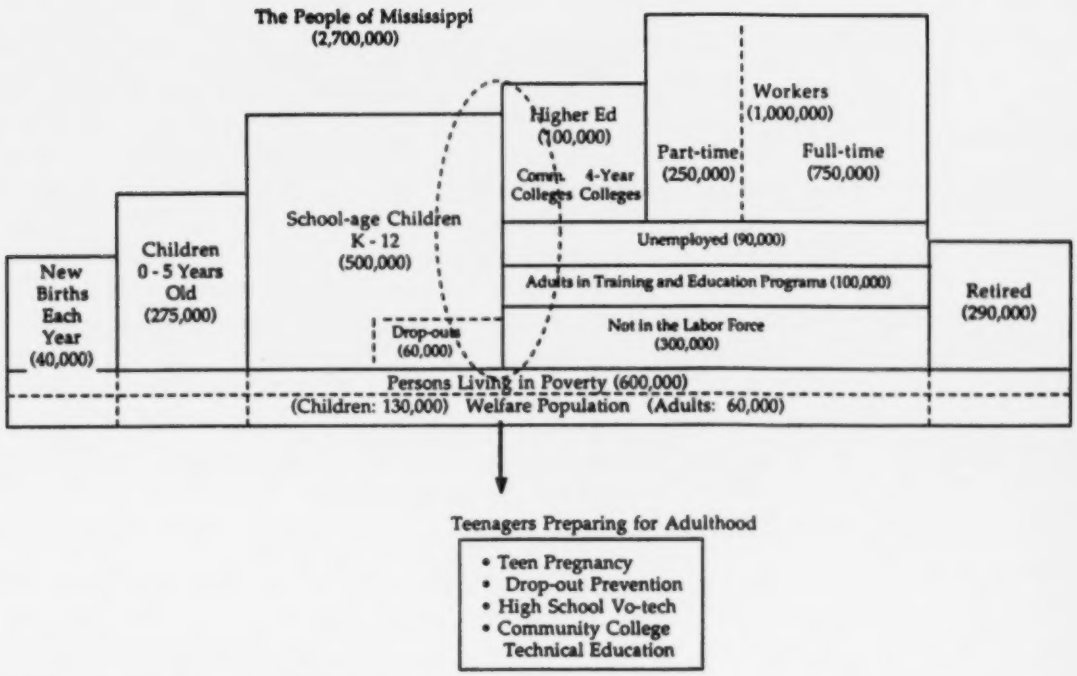
Goals--Benchmarks for Success

We will know we have made a difference in the lives of our teenagers when:

- High school dropout rate is cut in half
- Teen parenthood rate is cut in half
- ACT scores are up to national average
- College bound graduates increase 20%
- Minorities going on to college increases 30%
- All graduates of technical training are placed in jobs

In examining current practice and how to help our young adults be better prepared for work and adulthood, key issues to address include:

- Teenage pregnancy
- Drop-out Prevention and Guidance
- High School Vo-tech/Reform
- Community College technical training



Current Practice: Teenage Pregnancy

The costs to Mississippi of teen pregnancy are staggering. A conservative estimate by the Department of Public Health based solely on lifetime welfare, food stamps, and direct costs of support programs for children born to teen parents was $35,000 per child. That's $280 million dollars already committed every year to pay for the offspring of teen parents.

The State Board of Public Health carries the bulk of state responsibility for pregnancy prevention, providing family planning counseling and contraceptives through local clinics, running the school nurse intervention program and several in-school health and family planing clinics. Due to funding constraints, too many young people languish on waiting lists for clinical counseling and birth control services. While private doctors provide family planning assistance, the only private family planning provider in the state (Planned Parenthood) just opened in Gulfport. A health education curriculum has not been implemented in schools, although currently the "Healthy Children Make a Healthy Mississippi" Task Force is once again working to develop just such a mandatory curriculum, and persuade local education officials and communities to support funding to put it in place.

Current Practice: Drop-out prevention

Many locally engineered efforts are currently underway attempt to get drop-outs, particularly young mothers to "drop-in". The Department of Education has begun drop-out prevention pilot projects through local schools. Mandatory testing at grades 3, 5, and 8 has been initiated in hopes of identifying at-risk young people and

beginning remediation early enough to keep these young people in school. The functional literacy exam, now administered in 11th grade, identifies those who can't graduate, but perhaps not early enough to help them catch up and build the skills they need. In several areas JTPA youth programs target at-risk youth for special catch-up courses.

Current Practice: High School Vo-tech reform

Guidelines for curriculum reform in the Vo-tech system have been developed in recent years which include an emphasis on basic skills in the early grades, increased technical training, and a coordinated curriculum progression up the skill ladder in high school years. Outdated courses are supposed to be eliminated, and the local vo-tech board's relationships with local employers strengthened. It is unclear how aggressively curriculum and course changes are being made at the local level, replacing outdated courses for those with work world relevance. The system seems resistant to change; instructors and institutions often lack an understanding of the changing local labor market, and measures of "performance" in terms of job placements, or continuation to higher education, aren't available. Relationships between vo-tech instructors and courses and local employers still need strengthening. Considerable variation in terms of facilities and available courses exist within the vo-tech system.

Current Practice: Community College Technical Education

These regionally and community based institutions are a prime resource for meeting many of Mississippi's skill development needs. Community Colleges currently play multiple roles (over 1/2 of enrolled students are in the academic program, and they also house industrial training, JTPA, adult basic education and other programs) Too often they must help students "catch-up" with work meant to be completed in high school -- from 1/3 to 1/2 of all Community College students are enrolled in remedial courses.

60% of high school students who go on to college attend two year institutions, and enrollments in community colleges are up 20% over the past ten years. Community Colleges have purposefully been increasing the numbers of students in academic and technical courses, while vocational enrollments have fallen, in an effort to replace traditional vo-tech with full-time technical courses.

The degree to which Community Colleges effectively link their vocational and technical programs with high schools, universities, and the local business communities varies considerably by school. Instructors can tell you which of their students have gotten work, and where--but this information is not kept systematically all schools. We know Mississippi has some very strong and some very weak community colleges. Even with the formation of a new state-wide board,

as locally governed institutions, Community Colleges and their Presidents enjoy considerable autonomy. Lacking common performance standards, outcome measures, and faced with dramatically conflicting opinions and data, we could not clearly state if Community Colleges are delivering value for the large amount of taxpayer dollars they control.

There continue to be complaints that both community colleges and institutions of higher learning are not aggressive enough in developing coordinated technical curriculum, which links skills learned in high school, community college, and 4-year institutions in a clear progression.

Mississippi Community Colleges often resemble universities (with academic courses, dormitories, football teams) and debate continues over whether they could more usefully contribute to Mississippi's economic development by performing a niche role in adult remedial and technical education. Community Colleges contend that delivering high-quality academic courses and providing a means for many young people to transfer into Mississippi's Universities builds the support they need to play many other roles in the areas of economic development, workforce training, literacy, leadership training, and the like.

The appropriate role of Community Colleges is complex and politically charged. While attempting to come to grips with both the tremendous potential these institutions have and the concerns over mission and management that persist, we have not learned enough to make decisive judgements. We encourage Mississippi to continue to examine the role of Community Colleges, and hold them to high standards of performance.

BEST PRACTICES: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Given its size and resources, Mississippi devotes a very large amount of money to higher education. We must more closely scrutinize what we are getting for these investments, and ensure our Colleges and Universities become world-class. But too many Mississippi young people, often equally talented as their peers who go on to college, don't ever make it that far.

In devising successful strategies for assisting those young people who for a complex of reasons lose motivation, can't succeed, aren't ever challenged, or don't get the education and opportunity to realize their potential, several techniques do hold promise:

1. **Help young people focus on personal choices, personal responsibility, and decision-making.**

2. **Build self-esteem and peer support for constructive activities.**

3. **Identify at-risk youth early and deal with their needs in a comprehensive, client-centered manner.**

4. **Connect young people to adults and their community.**

5. **Connect young people to the world of work.**

6. **Encourage Math and Science literacy as a basic requirement for the future.**

1. Help young people focus on personal choices, personal responsibility and decision-making.

To have a second child is a choice even a teen mother can consciously make. Potential young fathers when confronted with their own responsibility and consequences of choices can respond. When given assistance in framing their life choices, young people can see how it benefits them not to drop out--but to make a plan for life.

- Schools can usefully supplement the health, family planning, and career discussions that aren't happening at home. In many cases, home is not a source of love or information on issues of concern. Most young people look to school for advice on career goals and options, as well as personal problems. School based health and family planning services succeed because they reach students where they "live" and discussion of sex can be had in the broader context of student's learning to make decisions and understand health and their own bodies. The School Nurse Intervention Program and the Jackson Hinds Comprehensive Health Clinics in schools both treat family planning in a broader context:

SNAPSHOTS OF SUCCESS

East Central Mississippi:

The School Nurse Intervention program is bringing needed health and family planning guidance to area junior high schools. A small number of nurses help identify a range of health needs and are able to communicate to young people the importance of making their own decisions and knowing the consequences of sexual activity. Where they have worked there appears to be an impact on unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. "They don't dispense contraceptives--just information, and help young people begin to discuss the issues", says Jane Lee of the Department of Public Health. The Department hopes to add more school nurses to the small number currently out there.

Jackson:

Jackson-Hinds Comprehensive Health Clinics in schools (7 high schools--1 new elementary school) catch many health problems among disadvantaged students. Started 10 years ago to identify health problems among high school athletes, the Comprehensive Health Clinics in local high schools have expanded to screen and treat health problems that go untreated for years in the poor neighborhoods where school-based clinics are targeted. Over the years standard health problems such as poor hearing, vision, and anemia that affect young people's ability to learn have been identified and treated by these clinics. They also have been instrumental in reducing unwanted pregnancies by providing accessible and private counseling and contraceptives. Dr. Aaron Shirley reports: "In the schools you've got a captive audience--and we catch so many things that aren't caught anywhere else--we're starting our first clinic in an elementary school this year to get further ahead."

2. Build self-esteem, and peer support for constructive activities.

Personal esteem and peer support can be an important element in effective counseling and guidance programs:

- South Carolina's Teen Leadership Institute takes teenagers from around South Carolina to a summer week-long retreat where they are schooled in drug, alcohol, and sex education counseling for their peers. Teen leaders return to organize peer counseling groups at their own high schools.

- Michigan's TIP program (Tuition Incentive Plan) offers disadvantaged students scholarships to state universities for those who excel in school. A similar effort run by philanthropist Gene Lang and the I Have A Dream Foundation "guarantees" the funds to pay for college for a whole class of young people at selected schools if they make it through high school with good grades. This program provides an adult advisor for each class.

  The experience of these programs has shown that when even the most disadvantaged young people have a goal they can see, and some support from adults in reaching that goal--they can succeed. Community or business sponsored education funds and foundations can provide similar financial incentives, recognition, and rewards for good performance.

- West Virginia's controversial new law requiring high school attendance in order to obtain a driver's license illustrates the dramatic effect of peer perceptions on teenagers. The law has dramatically reduced drop-out rates, because at that age being able to drive is of first importance. While the law's

constitutionality is still to be tested, and the "benefits" of young people staying in school just to be able to drive may be debated, the incentive works.

- We must also recognize the destructive effects of "tracking" young people into various "slots". We must not treat the distinction between academic, and "technical" or "vo-tech", as one between the best and the rest. In today's increasingly technical world, technical education is as valuable if not more valuable than more traditional or professional training. Quality technical training must be linked with real world needs and rewarded as such. Making vocational education deliver necessary skills is a continuing challenge, as is integrating high school, community college and higher education in clear progression of useful skills. Increasing the prestige and attractiveness of technical careers, particularly for minorities will mean dramatic changes. There are encouraging signs in Mississippi:

SNAPSHOTS OF SUCCESS

Tupelo:

"Vo-tech is dead!", proclaims Charles Chrestman--District Director at Itawamba Community College. Tupelo's schools and community college have made a conscious and successful effort to upgrade technical education and bury antiquated notions of vocational training. Years ago local leaders and citizens realized that education and training were critical to Tupelo's success. The Community Development Foundation was created to guide Tupelo's educational and economic development efforts. Getting direction from local employers about what skills were needed down the road, the local schools and Itawamba Community College raised money from the Tupelo community and outside sources, and working together replaced out-dated courses, facilities, and teaching methods with modern, forward looking facilities and curriculum. The result is partly responsible for Tupelo's economic success, particularly among manufacturing industries.

3. Identify at-risk youth early and deal with their needs in a comprehensive, client centered manner.

There are some good examples of how to reach at-risk young people in ways that help them stay competitive with their peers and keep their optimism about contributing to society.

SNAPSHOTS OF SUCCESS

Meridian:

Teen Learning Center: For almost 15 years, an alternative "school" for pregnant and teen mothers has been jointly operated by Meridian Community College and the local health department. Young women who otherwise might have dropped out of school permanently are given the customized and individual attention they need to set goals, learn parenting skills, and catch up on academic work in order to get back to high school. While only 20% of teen parents nationally finish school, 85% of young women going through the TLC have either finished or are in school now.

Testing throughout K-12 and holding teachers accountable for results will help identify those at-risk and create incentives for better performance. But testing alone won't work unless effective "catch-up" techniques are put in place. Mississippi still needs to put energy and money into bringing up to speed quickly those who fall behind. Computer-based, individually paced tutoring is one promising avenue:

SNAPSHOTS OF SUCCESS

***Gulf Coast*:**

Local programs such as the Gulf Coast PIC's JTPA-funded computer based remediation program is helping young people who are at least a grade behind advance a grade while they stay in school. The Gulf Coast Private Industry Council is funding a 7-school district computer-based remedial education program for high school students who are at least one-grade behind where they should be or who have failed the functional literacy exam. On the Gulf Coast, young people at risk of dropping out are able to catch up during the school year and over the summer by following the computer curriculum. PIC program manager John Bonner says: "Initially school administrators were skeptical of "outsiders" helping them out--now they love it. Part of the reason is money--kids who stay in school mean dollars to the school district". The Gulf Coast PIC is also starting a child-care program for teen parents, and operates a "Sentenced to Read" program whereby juvenile court judges sentence young offenders to learn to read as an alternative to state school.

4. Connect young people to adults and their community.

We can't leave our young people at school and assume they get the nourishment and challenge they need to become adults. Young people have a lot of energy which

if encouraged in positive directions can be a productive force for the community, help young people build confidence and skills, and feel they are a valued part of their adult world.

- Cities such as Seattle and St. Louis have consciously reached out to teenagers, asked their advice on what was right or wrong with their cities, and responded with specific, youth run programs. These ranged from recreational activities to crime prevention, to working on community building projects.

- Community Service/Conservation Corps: Several cities and states are organizing Youth Service Organizations and Conservation Corps as a way to give young people organized, supervised, constructive opportunities to develop skills and confidence. These include the Los Angeles Youth Community Service Corps, Vermont Serv, and California Conservation Corps. Maryland has taken a different tack, encouraging its schools to offer a community service elective.

- Local community education funds can offer incentives in the form of scholarship funds and recognition ceremonies and awards for achievement and community service.

- Schools, by opening after hours can sometimes take on the roll of "community educator" and community center, which encourage young people and adults to come together for enrichment, fun, and continuing education activities. In Jackson, Mississippi, otherwise empty school buildings are opened after hours for literacy, arts and crafts, typing courses and other activities which link young people, parents and the neighborhoods more closely together.

Another example of "community education" at work is in Hazelhurst:

SNAPSHOTS OF SUCCESS

Hazelhurst:

Spearheaded by charismatic school superintendent Dr. George French, the community has organized a full-scale assault on illiteracy and school drop-outs. The school is the hub of adult education classes, remedial classes, and an innovative day-care program which, as Dr. French puts it; "allows 'drop-out' teen parents to become 'drop-ins'". Local churches and newspapers contribute space and and help organize literacy classes. The state is looking to reproduce the school-based day-care and support services for young mothers through "Full Circle" programs in 4 other school districts. Dr. French also has a recipe for economic development: "16th section land--every school district has

it--some of it could be swapped or sold for economic development uses--we did it--you should look into it!"

5. Connect young people to the world of work.

If our young people can't see how the work they are doing now connects with their future--they won't understand the importance of learning, or get excited about their own opportunities:

- In Europe work-school co-op and apprenticeship programs are the norm. Building on a long tradition of guild-based training, teenagers as early as 10th grade work part-time for private employers. School course work is fully integrated with learning on the job site. Students prepare for professions such as finance and law, and more technical occupations. Teenagers can see clearly why they need to learn certain skills in school, develop confidence in their skills and a healthy work ethic, and have a tangible incentive to stay in school--a job at the end. Several cities across the US are developing large scale co-op and apprentice programs (Pittsburgh has the largest and most successful program) which link work and classroom experience, and provide an alternative to college preparatory work.

- Successful business-education partnerships like the Boston Compact provide young people with incentives to do well in school by guaranteeing them jobs when they graduate, and through summer jobs the opportunity for hands-on experience in the careers for which they are preparing.

- Technical training at both the high school and community college level must prepare young people for the real demands of real jobs. This makes it incumbent upon Mississippi educators to stay informed about the changes and expectations of local industry, and business men and women to help local training institutions tailor courses and curriculum to meet those needs.

Here in Mississippi, a well planned curriculum in technical training available at some vo-tech centers introduces young people to successive levels of skill and applicable learning that are useful to real jobs and higher education at a more advanced level:

SNAPSHOTS OF SUCCESS

Locations around Mississippi:

Two highlights of the new curriculum are Diversified Technology and Allied Health programs which provide an integrated package of courses for advanced competency in a range of technical and health professions. High school students in certain vo-tech programs are now

courses for advanced competency in a range of technical and health professions. High school students in certain vo-tech programs are now participating in an integrated, progressive curriculum to prepare for advanced work and education in the growing health and manufacturing technology fields. Starting early and giving students both the general basic skills and the specific technical knowledge they need to be prepared, these two curriculum "clusters" are showing the way for reform of traditional vo-tech education. They also begin to turn vo-tech into a progression of skills that can be upgraded at the community college and university level. Jimmy Harvell of Corinth, MS put it to a Senate Hearing: "Without Diversified Technology in High School, I would not have been able to learn as quickly at the college level."

- Teenagers must begin to learn early on that the society and economy they will work demands a global perspective. Mississippi can't neglect languages, world history, and international affairs in its primary and secondary education. Around the country companies like IBM, Digital Equipment and others are asking their employees to go to schools to teach and share insight into working in a truly international marketplace. Mississippi companies should consider the same.

6. Encourage math and science literacy as a basic requirements for the future.

The youth interested in math and science is often depicted as the "nerd" or introvert, which discourages interest in math, science and technology. In a 1985 national study, only 5% of all those surveyed qualified as scientifically literate -- less than in 1979. An interest in science and technology must be made more acceptable to all youth. And it is not just an issue for the high school teachers and guidance counselors to address. Attitudes towards science are formed in the first years of school. This means changing attitudes and methods throughout the education system, and in homes and communities. The Mississippi School for Math and Science is a step in the right direction. Additional ways of accomplishing this goal, included in the Southern Technology Council's Strategic plan for the South, *Turning to Technology*, include:

- Expand the role of the state's magnet Math and Science school to include curriculum R&D, teacher training, and broad outreach to make sure the entire state benefits.

- Informal education is one of the most effective means to attract youth to technical education and careers. In rural education, 4-H, and FFA were effective vehicles for informal science education. Large cities often have hands-on science museums, but small cities must find ways to bring science to life. Communities should consider buttressing these civic efforts.

- The Agriculture Education Supervised Occupational Experience model has been extremely successful in teaching rural youth how to solve technical and economic problems. The state and communities could encourage students to perform a supervised science experiment, chosen by the student and conducted out-of-school, but required for graduation.

- Many minority youth who do decide on technical careers find themselves at a disadvantage based on poorer preparation. Special programs to help make minorities make the transition from high school to university could be designed -- possibly as a one-year applied technology course in a community college with special tutoring in preparation for university level courses.

Recommendations

Mississippi cannot shrink from confronting the huge challenge of helping teenagers prepare for adulthood. This responsibility is one first and foremost for Mississippi parents and families. But we all know that strong two-parent families, good role models, and guidance just aren't there for a large number of teenagers. We must work together in our communities to fill this void and find ways of dealing with such sensitive topics as teen pregnancy, drugs, and family breakdown. We must help our young people conquer the scourge of racism by helping black and white teenagers to work together. While we create new jobs we must make sure our young people are ready to fill them and excited about their future. The following are a few ways to begin to address some of the most critical needs of Mississippi's young people.

I. **As part of Education Reform II, articulate clear measures of skills needed for "work-readiness" in the future and make sure all communities reach these standards.**

Education Reform II has set some ambitious goals including: all school students will be regularly assessed and performance improving, the drop-out rate will be reduced by one-half, and achievement scores are competitive with other countries. To reach these goals will require clear measures of the language and communication skills, quantitative skills, problem-solving skills, interpersonal/attitudinal skills, and job seeking/self-advancement skills students need to become globally competitive. It requires that resources be provided by communities and the state for giving those at-risk special assistance, and helping all schools get the facilities and learning technology they need to be first-class. It requires a new emphasis on accountability and performance in

II. Develop JOBSkills program of cooperative learning between local employers and local schools, as a means of strengthening vo-tech and transitional technical programs.

Vocational and technical education is increasingly important in today's technical society. America has done a disservice by treating vocational and technical education as the province of "nerds" and a dumping ground for slower students.

Studies have shown that vocational education can help young people, particularly the disadvantaged, stay in school longer and get better jobs. But the biggest gains from vocational education come when it is combined with on-the-job learning. Co-op learners are 12% more likely to remain in the labor force, 15% more likely to be employed, and earn 12% more per hour than their peers without on-the-job experience.

Mississippi has been working hard to upgrade its vocational system. The 1986 vo-tech strategic plan sought to increase technical programs, institute a new basic skills common core component in early secondary years, and decrease enrichment programs and outdated courses. It also sought to better judge performance by success at employability.

This plan has been implemented slowly and unevenly. Secondary vo-tech schools are viewed suspiciously by businesses, according to our recent survey. There continue to be mismatches between skills and trades taught in vo-tech schools and those required by businesses. Young people still don't have the clear incentive to do well and stay in school.

In order to provide these incentives, speed the transformation of vo-tech to a respected technical training track, improve accountability to local employers, and dramatically increase the number of young people reaping the benefits of complementary on the job/school learning, a new JOBSkills component should be added to the advanced skills programs of 10-12 graders.*

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*(This proposal follows closely the model proposed by Robert Lerman and Hillard Pouncy).

JOBSkills would involve several elements:

- a contract between student and employer for part-time, graded work.
- competitive entry requirements: employers select candidates based on previous school performance, aptitude, and interest.
- complementary skills training courses at the school.

Employers and students could make a contract in almost any field of work and study: technical, professional, medical, legal, accounting.

Employers would be responsible for providing supervised work experience, mentoring, and assessment of student performance. Employers would pay a minimum or sub-minimum wage. Employers also would be encouraged to provide equipment and technical assistance in designing in-school course work.

Schools would be responsible for guidance, screening, support, and transportation, developing complementary in-school education and skill development opportunities, and testing skills and competencies learned at the job and in-school.

Students would still be responsible for traditional course work in math, science, English, writing, etc.,. Their school schedule would be less extensive than college bound individuals allowing progressively more time on the job through 11th and 12th grades. Students would be required to exhibit good behavior, work habits, and make occasional reports and presentations to classmates on work experience and otherwise fulfill the terms of contract with employers.

The state would need to work with school districts on attendance waivers and curriculum adjustments to permit JOBSkills to work. The state would also need to assist local districts with the cost of the program, working through the PICS to allocate JTPA youth funds, and redirecting Perkins Vo-Tech monies to support this component. The state would also need to aggressively monitor the local programs to ensure that the program was teaching real skills and not becoming a subsidy for low-cost, dead-end jobs.

If fully developed after several local pilots a JOBSkills track could begin to replace traditional vo-tech at secondary and post-secondary level, provide real incentives for young people to do well and stay in school, and prepare a future work force that was motivated and skilled as never before.

Employers would get better trained and motivated workers, and develop a more productive relationship with local education institutions.

Cities such as Pittsburgh have had tremendous success with work-based cooperative learning. No state has tried it on a large scale. For Mississippi it provides a real opportunity.

III. Launch Statewide Teen Pregnancy Prevention Effort

Reconstitute Governor's Task Force on Adolescent Pregnancy--which would help identify communities most in need of intervention. State would continue to expand School Nurse Intervention Program to schools with highest incidence of teen pregnancy, and work hard to encourage communities to adopt and pay for new health curriculum. State should also ask schools to work with local health clinics to provide health counseling and family planning services on a timely basis.

Use community development efforts of Community Partnership and other community based organizations to bring churches, local leaders, and community groups together to make plans to reduce teen pregnancy. Many communities around the state have disturbing rates of teen pregnancy among both blacks and whites.

Expand Full Circle/Teen Learning Center models for helping young mothers and pregnant teens statewide, targetting to communities, schools, and populations with highest teen pregnancy rates.

IV. Establish Youth Community Service Corps as part of local community development efforts.

Service corps would design and implement constructive youth projects and activities. Would begin in-school peer drug, sex, and alcohol counseling. Service Corps would bring together black and white teenagers from public schools and "academies" and reflect the racial balance of the community.

Leadership training groups and alumni would take the lead in developing Youth Service Corps and establishing a statewide *Peer Training Institute*, bringing representatives from Local Youth Service Corps together annually for instruction in peer counseling techniques and special recognition ceremonies.

Youth Community Service Corps, or other youth and community group should develop a *Rural Youth Enterprise Program*. Schools, working with community groups would assist teenage entrepreneurs in developing local businesses to

meet local needs, and providing training and advice in developing tomorrow's entrepreneurs Mississippi urgently needs.

CHILDREN 0-4: PREPARING FOR SCHOOL

Mississippi's youngest citizens are our future. If we don't take care of the health needs and provide a good start in life to our youngest citizens, Mississippi in the 20th century won't prosper and we all will continue to pay for our neglect. Mississippi is a young state relative to the rest of the country and it has a relatively high birth rate--over 40,000 infants are born each year. Mississippi's children have lots of needs:

- Too many of our youngest citizens are born into poverty. Nationally the poverty rate for children is bad enough at 20%. In Mississippi, it's more like 40%. With one of the lowest welfare benefit levels of all the states, and limited assistance in the form of housing and other family needs, Mississippi's large population of poor children live in unacceptable conditions. The health and welfare of these children, which adversely affects their future ability to learn, is one of the most serious obstacles to Mississippi's future economic growth.

- Often these children are the result of an unwanted teen pregnancy. Mississippi leads the nation in the numbers of births to teens, and the costs to Mississippi in the form of government support for these children and their mothers are staggering--$35,000 per child over 20 years or $280 million each year is spent to support these children.

- While improving, in key health measures such as infant mortality rates (as high as 18/1000 in some areas), low birth weights, and numbers of mothers who receive inadequate pre-natal care, Mississippi still rates near the bottom nationally. Only 69% of two year olds are properly immunized. These aren't just statistics which concern the child's family. As taxpayers, we all pay for the damage.

- Early childhood education, while dramatically improved with state-wide kindergarten programs, is still the exception rather than the rule for most Mississippi children. While Head Start programs are extensive, reaching 19,000 children all over the state--they by no means serve all those eligible, and fewer than 1 in 5 of Mississippi's children get any organized pre-school education. Lack of child care and early education and child development assistance, particularly in rural areas, places barriers between parents and useful work.

The people of Mississippi understand the problems young children and their parents face:

"Mothers too often have to face the choice of going to work for several hours and spending everything they've earned to pay a sitter--or leaving the children alone.....They choose to leave them alone."

"Legislators think if they just appropriate the money to the State Board of Health, the problems will go away.--we need health to start at the community level."

"People think it's just blacks having all these babies."

"If we just showed people the infant mortality rates in their own towns--they would be shocked."

"We are moving towards early childhood education--but slowly, we just did kindergarten."

"Head Start is great"...."Head Start is as good as the local people who run it"..."Head Start needs looking into."

To move ahead in meeting these challenges we once again need clear ideas of how to measure improvement.

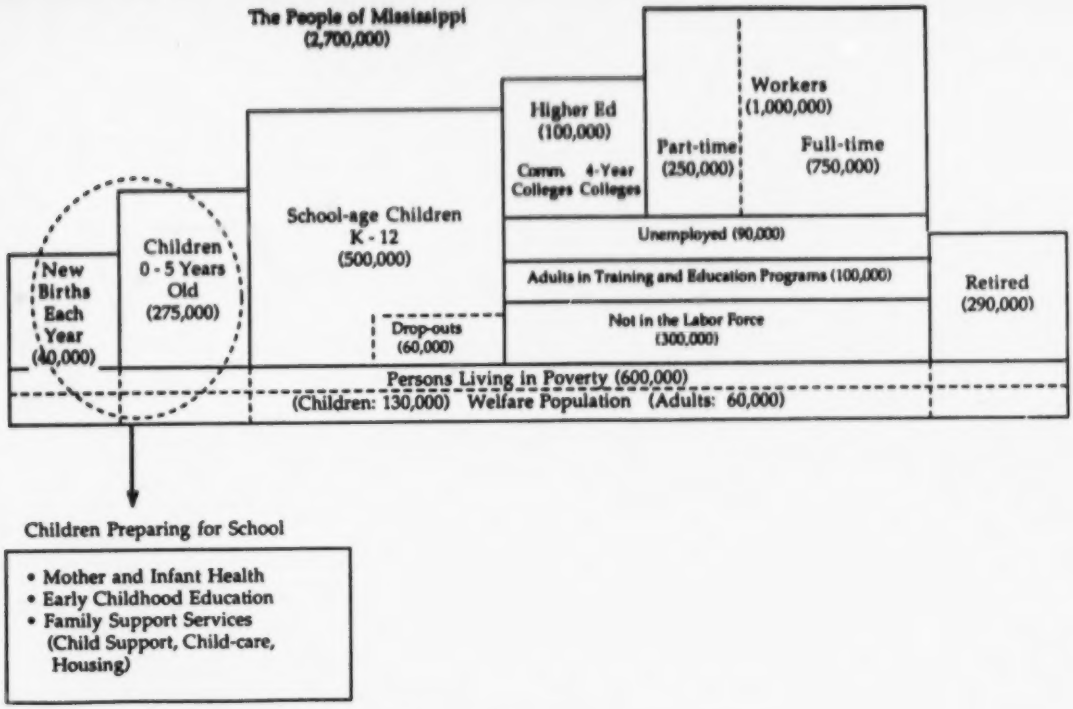
Goals and Benchmarks for Effective Action

We'll know we've had an impact when we meet these measures of performance.

- Continue infant mortality rate reductions to 10/1000-- other targets by regions.
- Reduce low birth-weight babies to 8%--other targets by regions.
- Double child support enforcement collections.
- All at-risk mothers have access to pre-natal and perinatal care.
- Help Head Start and early childhood education programs reach 90% of eligible at-risk children.
- Expand number of employers offering day care for workers by 500.
- All children are fully prepared for kindergarten.

To meet these goals we must see that our children get effective assistance in several key areas:

- Mother and infant health
- Early childhood education
- Family Support Services including Child Support, Child Care, and Housing



Current Practice: Mother and Infant Health

Providing for the basic health needs of our youngest citizens is critical. The Board of Public Health through its county health clinics provides the bulk of public health services to mothers and young children including pre-natal, maternity and early childhood immunizations and checkups. Eighteen thousand women get their maternity care through Public Health. Most come to public health because of poverty. Medicaid pays for 15-16,000 of these women. An estimated 4,000 more women are eligible who aren't served. The federally funded WIC program (Women, Infants, and Children), which provides supplemental nutritious foods to pregnant women and infants, reaches 62% of the eligible population. Eighty percent of all immunizations are done through public health facilities.

Mississippi is taking concrete additional steps to provide adequate health care to its youngest citizens before and after birth. The State is currently implementing the HIP program (Health Improvement Plan) recommended by the Governor's Task Force on Infant Mortality. The plan has several chief components:

- Expanded Medicaid eligibility to 185% of poverty level for mothers and infants to one year--(100% of poverty for mothers to 5 years),
- Adequate Medicaid reimbursement for doctors performing maternity and pediatric services,
- Regionalization of health services,

- Peri-natal high risk management program--case management for at-risk mothers.

The result if funded and implemented should be affordable and accessible basic health services to all Mississippi mothers with infants.

Current Practice: Early Childhood Education

Mississippi has made dramatic strides forward by increasing early childhood education efforts with the implementation of state-wide kindergarten programs. These programs involved 37,000 5-year olds last year. Headstart constitutes the bulk of other early childhood programs, involving 19,000 kids last year through 300 local centers in all 82 counties. It includes health screening, nutrition, and family counseling services. Headstart enrollments are down in part due to funding cuts, but much of the drop is the result of kindergarten enrollments.

Several innovative new family literacy programs involving mother/child independent and group instruction such as "HIPPY", "PACE", and Federally funded "Even-Start", are underway in Mississippi communities. While still limited in scope, these efforts show great promise in helping disadvantaged mothers and their children develop skills and confidence.

Current Practice: Family Support Services including Child Support, Child Care, and Housting

Children require a household that can provide for their basic needs and preserve a safe environment. Included in indicators of the adequacy of family support are household income (including child support), day care when parents work, housing, and attention to special needs such as disabilities or abuse in the home.

130,000 Mississippi children live in welfare households and two to three times that number live in poverty. Less than 28% of very low income families receive housing assistance. Obviously children born to young parents or lacking a two parent family are most at risk. Here Mississippi's high rates of teen parents and single parent households are a major concern. Only 31% of Mississippians below the poverty line receive AFDC. The monthly benefit (app. $110 for mother of 2) is only 20% of average personal income and ranks 49th out of 50 states. A typical package of benefits for a mother of two in Jackson might include:

$110 AFDC benefits
$230 Food Stamps
$ 10 Energy Assistance
$118 Medicaid Health Benefits.
$448 Total/month

Mississippi's welfare case workers carry the highest case-load in the country--298 cases per worker in 1988!. While they deliver a variety of support services geared at helping young children of welfare clients, including arranging transportation and child-care, protective custody, preventing abuse, counseling, etc..., they are constrained by both time and available dollars. They barely scratch the surface of these needs. Federal monies fund roughly 80% of these support services.

Responding to new federal legislation, stepped up *Child Support Enforcement* efforts in recent years have netted close to $19 million dollars in delinquent payments but there are millions more that could be collected. Currently over $3 is recovered for every $1 spent.

The *Governor's Task Force on Child Care* estimated that 110,000 children with working mothers were not in licensed child care, only 2% of children who qualify for federally subsidized child-care receive this care, and child-care slots generally are expensive and concentrated in urban areas-- meaning significant shortages in rural communities and smaller towns.

Mississippi spends no state money on child care. Most of the available funds come from federal social service block grant monies made available to Welfare and other departments. The Governor's Office of Children & Youth is working to develop acceptable and consistent licensing practices for child-care providers, and developing private-public partnerships to create more child-care slots. A child-care referral network has been created through the Mississippi Employment Security Commission.

Mississippi is also under pressure to develop a federally mandated action plan to assist the 2500 children with disabilities obtain the care they require.

A recent *Governor's Task Force on Housing* found significant disparities in the quality of rental and owner-occupied housing among Mississippi communities. 45% of rental housing is possibly substandard--ranging from 28% in some counties to 65% in other areas. Up to 26% of owner occupied housing in some areas was deemed sub-standard. The home environment for poor children is of particular concern. 50% of poor households owned their own homes--but 11% of these lacked plumbing or had more than one person living in a room. Of the 88,000 poor households who rent, a full 21% lacked plumbing or are overcrowded. Furthermore, most of those households who qualify for housing assistance don't get any help--this number could be as high as 96,000.

The Governor's Task Force made a series of recommendations, some of which have been implemented, to deal with the serious problem of inadequate shelter for Mississippi families. The Mississippi Home Corporation has been founded to provide resources and technical assistance to communities and non-profit groups in

developing housing for low and moderate income and special needs populations. Several local public-private initiatives are underway to develop affordable housing. The state and communities must continue to move aggressively to implement the recommendations of the Task Force and find innovative ways to provide quality housing for all Mississippi citizens

BEST PRACTICES: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

What's happening for Mississippi's youngest citizens is good, but it's not enough. Mississippi doesn't have the time to change slowly if it is to move forward. We must look at efforts already underway in Mississippi, and elsewhere that work for young children and develop them across the state.

Experience in helping our youngest citizens in Mississippi and around the country teaches us several lessons and reveals workable strategies for effective assistance:

1. **Comprehensive, inter-agency, client-centered approach targeted on the most vulnerable mothers and children is most effective.**
2. **Community based, flexible programs can meet multiple needs of parents and children.**
3. **Successful early childhood development programs build on and strengthen the family.**
4. **Reinforce the fact that having children involves real responsibilities and obligations.**
5. **Employers have a responsibility to assist families with young children to cope in a changed world of work and family life.**
6. **Increase investment in early intervention.**

Everything tells us start early. You can tell who will drop-out by 4th grade. Kids who remain at a disadvantage will strangle Mississippi's future, no matter what economic development steps are taken in the next 10 years. If we don't help now these children will never be good learners or effective workers. Its more then these children's futures that is at-risk -- its Mississippi's future.

1. **A comprehensive, inter-agency, client centered approach targetted on the most vulnerable mother and child is most effective.**

   Agencies and providers who combine forces and work together with at-risk individuals--meeting multiple needs through a single, comfortable relationship can be most effective. A good example is the Peri-natal High Risk Management Program--part of the Health Improvement Plan recently passed by the legislature:

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Key to the HIP program is the Peri-natal High Risk Management program--screening high risk mothers for special interdisciplinary case-management by health service professionals and social workers. If the Tupelo pilot project is indicative, then it has tremendous potential for providing the "client centered" approach needed to be effective. Mothers giving birth are assessed for risk factors that might jeopardize their newborn (poverty, history of family violence, specific health hazards) and a case-working team of health and social service professionals is assigned to make sure the mother and infant follow through on continuing health and family needs. The cost of the case workers is to be made up by the new Medicaid federal match money available for such mothers. Many more mothers than expected are at risk. Nurse Connie Arrington: "We expected 25% of mothers to screen-on as at-risk--we're getting 50%!" Tupelo's Public Health officials are also beginning a volunteer counseling program for new mothers called HUGS--which helps new parents take care of their babies appropriately.

2. Community-based, flexible programs can meet the"multiple needs" of parents and children.

To be successful programs must have the support and investment of parents and be tailored to both their needs and the needs of their children

SNAPSHOTS OF SUCCESS

82 Counties:

In Mississippi Head Start works because it is community run and organized; local people care about it. Parents are involved--and learning becomes a participatory, family activity--while it also meets parent's need for "day-care". Head Start identifies and treats multiple needs in one comfortable environment--screening for health problems, nutrition, family troubles--and making sure problems are followed up with attention. As Grace Simon of the Jackson Clarion Ledger recently wrote on Head Start's 25th birthday: " Born and raised dirt-poor...I saw poverty overwhelm and strangle my four brothers and older sister..... Head Start paved the way for me to get into school....The teachers told me I could succeed.."

3. **Successful early childhood development programs build on and strengthen the family.**

Effective learning occurs for both parents and children when the importance of self esteem and the appropriate, nurturing context of the family is the foundation of the program. In Arkansas and now in Greenville, Mississippi, the HIPPY program is a model of how both parent and child benefit, and families are strengthened. In HIPPY it is assumed 1) that parents *can* teach and be responsible for their children, no matter how poor their own education may be, and 2) creating a positive environment for learning *within the home* and continued positive interaction is the biggest contribution outsiders can make to a child's development:

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Greenville:

Adapted for Mississippi from Israel and Arkansas, the HIPPY plan of early childhood education in the home by the child's mother is being developed by community action groups with state assistance. Welfare recipients and disadvantaged mothers and their children are recruited and tutored by their neighbors. The mothers and their child or children then embark on a two year interactive learning curriculum. The program helps both mother and child to develop better skills and self-esteem. Gwen Lynch--who bangs on doors in Greenville to recruit poor women--explains what happens with HIPPY: "Some of these women were living in filth--wearing their housecoats all day, not thinking they could do anything. By showing them they could teach their child, they got their act together and starting caring about themselves and their children."

- In Missouri, "New Parents as Teachers" operating through local school districts provides first-time parents and their children, from all backgrounds, with services from the third trimester of pregnancy until a child is three years old, including monthly meetings of parents, home visits by parent educators, health assessments, guidance on child development, and a Parent Resource Center. Originally piloted in three school districts, the program has proved so successful that the legislature has voted to extend it statewide.

- Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education Program is a state funded effort which gives interested communities help in setting up a range of services and activities for parents and children from birth to kindergarten. Each program is locally run and directed by an advisory council made up mostly of parents. The biggest benefit, evaluators say is strengthened families and increased parent participation in school that continues into later years.

4. **Reinforce the fact that having children involves real responsibilities and obligations.**

   - Fathers must assume responsibility for their actions and understand the consequences. Effective child support enforcement, like Wisconsin's law where a percentage of father's pay is automatically deducted, can be a persuasive deterrent to having unwanted children and a means to ensure a minimum support level off the public dole for children and their mothers.

   - A Marian County, Indiana teen parenting program allows young fathers, under court supervision, to make a "contract" with the mother allowing part of their support payments to go towards education and training they enroll in themselves, in order to boost their own future earnings potential.

   - Mothers also have a responsibility to make choices on behalf of their children--eat the right foods, refrain from smoking, drinking, and other drug abuse, get check-ups, teach their children, get off of welfare. When encouraged to see the consequences of their actions and the choices they do have, parents can and will respond.

5. **Employers have a responsibility to assist families with young children to cope in a changed world of work and family life.**

The days of the stay at home mother and the two parent household as the norm are over. Nationally 62% of mothers with children 3-5 are employed. In Mississippi, 63% of mothers with school age children work outside the home. For women on welfare with young children, the single biggest obstacle to employment is the lack of child-care. Employers can help families cope by providing child-care, flexible hours, parental leave, and comprehensive health benefits.

6. **Increase investment in early intervention.**

Research shows $1 invested in pre-natal care saves $11 down the road. $1 invested in nutritious foods for mothers and their children saves $3 in health costs. $1 in immunization saves $10 in treating a communicable disease. Head Start participants do markedly better in school and in life than children who do not have the experience. They are twice as likely to be employed, and 50% more likely to finish high school. One dollar spent for Head Start is estimated to save $7 dollars per child in foregone remediation and special assistance.

The pay-offs from early investment in children are huge, but they are not evident until much later. Where enough time has elapsed to make a judgement the results are startling:

- The Perry Pre-School Program in Ypsilanti Michigan enrolled low-income black children with low IQs in a two and a half hour daily pre-school program, coupled by staff home visits to work with mother and child. The last evaluation in 1984 revealed that at age 19 participants had fewer school absences and higher grades, a higher high school graduation rate, higher employment rates, lower pregnancy and birth rates for young women. The estimated cost-effectiveness of the program was a $7,000 per child savings for the public. If we added only one thousand at-risk children to the 19,000 now served by Head Start we would save Mississippi $7 million dollars.

Recommendations

These techniques and models can be used to build a whole series of specific recommendations and better programs. Much is already being done throughout Mississippi. We all share a special responsibility towards our youngest citizens, and must do more as parents, educators, state and local officials, and members of our community to ensure all children get off to a good start in life.

We propose the following key steps:

I. **Help communities reproduce successful "family literacy" and locally-based early childhood education efforts on a massive scale.**

As we have seen, several communities are attempting to link local Head Start programs to broader community and family literacy efforts. These local/state initiatives such as HIPPY, PACE, "Full Circle", Even Start, and other learning programs for young mothers that are sprouting up around Mississippi provide promise of education to benefit both young children and disadvantaged adults in a way that strengthens the family.

To establish these efforts more broadly would mean:

- Provide state and community resources to Head Start and other early childhood programs in order to expand the number of children they serve, hours available, and strengthen these programs. Communities should target those children and parents most in at-risk, and not already involved in Head Start.

- State seed money, matched by local community as part of Community Partnership efforts.

- Incorporate parent/child education programs into community economic development efforts, using resources of schools, newspapers, and other

means to reach target participants. Bring black and white churches and schools together to craft common opportunities for children.

- Open school doors after school hours for extended day care and for extending Head Start hours and into summertime.

II. Continue to fund expansion of early childhood health, education, and nutrition programs.

The state needs to continue to invest in proven preventive strategies. It must set common goals for infant health, nutrition, and early childhood education and coordinate state human service and economic development providers at the local level to help meet these goals. Infant mortality rates have dropped in recent years, thanks in part to public awareness and increased investment. The HIP program for pre- and perinatal care promises to reach most at-risk mothers and infants if funded. Keeping public attention on continual reductions on key indicators of infant health and welfare will keep dollars flowing, and public and community involvement high.

III. Implement welfare reform to encourage transition to work and self-sufficiency;

Allocate funds to provide necessary child-care, training and transportation to help the welfare dependent secure employment. Expand self-employment and entrepreneurship pilot projects for welfare recipients. Focus resources to foster self-help among long-term welfare recipients. *The basic benefit over time must be raised to protect health and well-being of children.*

I V. Expand and publicize child support enforcement efforts.

There is no excuse for the taxpayer paying to maintain mothers and children when an able-bodied father is alive. Mississippi should implement mandatory pay withholding, move to publicly arrest and prosecute delinquent fathers, and launch an aggressive public relations campaign to enforce child support payments and deter unwanted pregnancy.

V. Continue state efforts to develop acceptable day-care standards and develop public-private partnerships to provide more day-care slots.

Companies can pool their resources and ask their employees to contribute towards affordable day-care.